



## A PRIVATE UNIVERSE





A  
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PART I  
ENGLAND  
AND OTHER MATTERS'



## ADVICE TO A YOUNG FRENCHMAN LEAVING FOR ENGLAND

**Y**OU are going to live in a far country. The distance is not in space (the journey is shorter than from Paris to Lyons), but in ideas and manners. You are going to live in a mysterious and difficult country. During your first days there you will murmur, 'This is a hopeless business. I'll never get to know them, they'll never understand me. It is too wide a gulf to cross.' But take heart. It can be crossed. Bear in mind that once they have taken you up, they will be your steadfast friends. Read Lawrence's book, 'Revolt in the Desert,' and you will see how that Englishman turned back alone into a perilous desert to look for an obscure Arab left behind by the caravan. The friendship of the best of them is like that. I myself put it to the test during the War. It well deserves the efforts needed to gain it. And remember too that, notwithstanding this seeming difficulty, it will suffice to observe a very few rules to avoid rubbing them up the wrong way.

### *Dress.*

Two principles, no more: dress as they do; dress simply. As they do, because they like conformity. If you play golf in riding breeches or dine in a regimental mess in 'shorts', you will shock and grieve them. But you will shock them even more if you show such bad taste as to be 'over-dressed'. No too-perfect clothes, no too-new shoes. Jane Harrison, in her recollections, described her pleasure at seeing the Duke of Devonshire receiving an honorary degree at Cambridge and



wearing shoes so worn-out that his socks showed through. Those socks, she said, convinced her that he was truly ducal. Don't imagine in London that you ought to dress like an Englishman on his travels. In London an Englishman is not on his travels; imitate him, and dress as you do in Paris.

*Conversation.*

Until you have found your feet, don't talk much. Nobody will blame you for your silence. When you have held your tongue for three years, they will think: 'He's a nice quiet fellow.' Be modest. An Englishman will tell you about his 'little place in the country', and when he invites you down there, you'll find that the little place is a mansion with three hundred rooms. If you are a lawn-tennis champion, just say: 'Oh, I'm not too bad.' If you have crossed the Atlantic single-handed, say: 'Yes, I've done some sailing.' If you have written books, say nothing. They will find out your qualities for themselves, in time; they'll tell you with a laugh: 'I've been hearing something about you', and they will be pleased with you. If you are treated unfairly (that will happen—they are sometimes unfair) go straight and tell them just where you think they are mistaken. The odds are that they will admit it. They are always anxious to play the game. If France is attacked in your presence, counter-attack fiercely; they will take it in good part.

A golden rule: never ask questions. I have lived for six months in the same tent as an Englishman; we shared a bath; but he never asked me whether I was married, or what I did in peace-time, or what were the books I read. If you must offer confidences, they will be listened to with polite indifference. Beware of confidences about other people. Gossipy stories exist there as elsewhere, but they are at once

more sparse and more serious. Between silence and scandal there is no golden mean. Choose silence.

Do not imagine that your intellectual worth gives you any prestige in their eyes (except amongst a very small set in London and at the Universities). Only one thing counts—your character. I doubt whether you could even imagine the contempt in which all literary culture is held by a certain type of Englishman. You are entering the only country where a man will unabashedly say to a writer, 'Books? I've never read a single book. . . . When I try to, I can see I'm not getting hold of anything I read . . . So what's the good?' But you are left at liberty to read, and you will be gently chuffed about it, rather as they might chuff someone who collected rhinoceros horns. A taste for rhinos would be more comprehensible.

Last night I tried to talk to a young Englishman who had been up at Cambridge for two years about the notable dons I know there. He did not know even their names. 'How should I?' he said. 'I took up rowing as soon as I went up, and when you row seriously you only live in a very small circle.' And thereupon he began deploring the young generation who were spoilt by dancing and sports cars, 'and refuse,' he said, 'to work for their college'. The word 'work' from his lips surprised me. I questioned him. He meant playing Rugby. I was reassured.

Alongside this 'athletic' type, you must learn to know the 'aesthete' type. For a long time you will feel a lesser being in the small 'intellectual set' I spoke of. Cultivated Englishmen are few, but their culture is exquisite, their epigrams are swift and subtle, their taste exacting and perfect. They have a blend of relish and superciliousness which is dangerous to your self-respect. You will be anxious to please them and you will find it very hard to catch the right note. Try to find it in a blend of nonchalance and pre-

ciosity. Write one essay on cocktails and another on the Chinese poets. If you understand them properly, you may find Proust a strong bond in common. He is the one French writer who is close to them. They will guide you in your reading: I should advise E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, David Garnett, and the three Sitwells. Maurice Baring's novels will give you a true picture of the 'Racine side' of English society.

When you seek to convince them avoid arguing too well. As a Frenchman you imagine the battle is won when you have proved that you are right. To them it is a matter of indifference whether logic puts them in the right or the wrong. On the contrary, they rather mistrust reasoning when it is too well put. When the French delegates at Geneva put forward the disarmament Protocol the English rejected it because it was so clear. 'It won't work,' they said. What they like is a policy tested and tried by time, ancient maxims, old usage. To induce them to do something new, show them that they have always been doing it. Give logic a rest whilst you stay over there.

#### *Activity.*

Don't work too hard. Above all, don't be what they call 'fussy'. Wait until they ask you to do things. Don't rush ahead of tasks with excessive zeal. 'Are they lazy?' you ask. Yes, a little; but the point is rather that they see a kind of pride in wanting to do too much. Look how they walk, with rather slow, too long strides. That is how they move through life. They don't like to jostle destiny. In the Army they used to tell me: 'Never refuse a job; never ask for a job.' Like all men, they have ambition; but they hide it pretty well.

#### *Justice.*

Don't commit murder in England. You will be hanged. Before a French jury, given some imagination, a romantic

mien, and a good counsel, you can fairly easily save your neck. But those twelve Englishmen will listen to your talk of sentimental sufferings with startled indignation, and will have you hanged by the neck until you are dead. True, they acquitted a Frenchwoman who committed murder a few years ago; but it was only an Egyptian that she killed. Be careful; steer clear of their law courts. Their judges are terrible, and will regard you as guilty before you have said a word. The cross-examinations of their barristers are of such devilish ingenuity that you will confess to having stolen the Nelson Monument to get clear of that hail of questions. Remember that respect for the Law is greater there than elsewhere. 'Keep off the Grass' in English does not mean 'Walk on this Lawn.'

### *Food.*

Before you go you will be told that you will feed badly in England. Well, cooks and chefs there are not so good as in France. But if you can time your hunger properly you can eat to perfection. The two excellent meals there are breakfast and tea; luncheon is middling, dinner, *bid*. Reserve your appetite for the first two. Learn to appreciate new delights—porridge, haddock, marmalade. At luncheon eat from the great joint of underdone beef, or some of the admirable pink ham. Pass over the dessert with a masculine air. Say firmly: 'I don't care for sweets.' In England every other shop is a sweet-shop, and yet the English are contemptuous of sweets. Leave them to the women and children.

Make the national drinks your own. They will tell you that whisky is 'a clean drink'. It is true; whisky leaves your mind clear, your tongue clean, your body warmed. Their beer is good, but beware of drinking it as you might drink French beer. During the War the Tommies used to tell me

plaintively: 'You can't get drunk on this French beer!' Which was perhaps true. But don't forget that a Frenchman can get drunk on English beer. Accept their champagne; they understand it thoroughly. Bring yourself to drink a cocktail before dinner, port after dinner, and whisky at tea in the evening; you will make scant progress in their esteem if you remain a water-drinker. When Disraeli was in discussion with Bismarck, he forced himself to smoke although it made him ill. In such circumstances, he declared, the man who is not smoking appears to be keeping an eye on the other. Besides, you will get the taste for it, and their crusty port is excellent.

But above all, enjoy the general spectacle. You will like those landscapes that seem to have been drawn by Constable and Gainsborough. You will like the rather wild gardens, with their trim, close-shaven lawns. You will like London with its grey-gold fog and the red splashes of buses and the black splashes of policemen, like a vast Turner. You will like the theatres with their comfortable stalls, their attractive programme girls, their short intervals. You will like the enticing, multicoloured bookshops, like shops of exotic fruits. And more than anything you will like the books . . . (but don't say so).

## FROM A HOLIDAY DIARY, 1928

JULY 31ST.—Finished 'Climats' last night before leaving France. I have pangs of regret at leaving slain Philippe, and not having attempted a picture of happiness, in a third part. Difficult, no doubt. 'Symphony in white major.' And yet the curve of happiness has its variations no less than that of tragic lives. I shall try to do that later with different characters. Philippe had a taste for restlessness; he would soon have wearied of poise and tranquillity. Perhaps I ought to have made it clear that I see no inevitability in that surrender to one's self, that easy soft-heartedness of the characters in 'Climats'. This morning I brought along with me in the Paris-Calais train Alain's 'Propos sur le bonheur'. I agree with him that it is possible to *make* one's happiness, and that fatalism in sentiment is no less false than the fatalism of action. I feel more and more that the problem of Free Will is fallacious. Of course the universe is vast and complex, and of course we are small and weak. Nevertheless, we have a grip, rather as the touch of a child's finger-tip on a switch can set a huge factory into operation. Philippe and Odile and Isabelle are wrong in being what they are.

But that is how they were, and that's all about it. . . .

GUILDFORD. AUGUST 1ST.—It has been a troublesome journey. Five changes. The trains here seem to weave unaccountable arabesques all over the country. One of them threads the seaside stations like a string of sea-pearls, then turns up in the direction of London, and drifts away

again in the end to saunter through the countryside. Junctions everywhere. We are far from the Napoleonic Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée and from Laroche, the immutable and controlling factor amongst railway-stations, pacific and civil, dispenser of earthly possessions, fixed landmark of the travelling Frenchman. In England the trains go everywhere if you give them time, as thoughts do, or novels.

The house which the H.s have chosen for us is a small manor belonging to a retired colonel. Elizabethan, very plain, charming. It is surrounded by a green lawn which comes right up to the walls without a pathway, like a nailed-down carpet. Beyond a white fence lies a private golf-course, with flocks of sheep grazing amongst oak-trees à la Gainsborough. 'Only nine holes,' said the Colonel apologetically. I reassured him. In the park, a long avenue called the Monks' Walk, a small antique temple (three columns with pediment), a stream overhung by willows, and then a very straight hill, a curious ridge of chalk which cuts across the plain and is called the Hog's Back.

Here is the history of the house: from the date of its building until the War, that is, throughout four centuries, it belonged to the same family, land-owning gentry of the county. The dining-room walls are covered with their portraits—judges, soldiers, ambassadors. After the War these squires were forced by taxation and bad investments to sell. (They now occupy a small cottage quite near.) It was a time when the British Army, cutting down its millions of men to two hundred thousand, was forced to get rid of many officers of high rank. Our Colonel, having received quite a substantial gratuity, left the Army and bought this country-house. There he entertained his war-time colleagues, laid down tennis-courts, kept up the golf-course, and then, finding last year that he was ruined, decided to take 'paying

guests'. And to-day, as a gentleman-host, solicitous and masterful, he busies himself with his guests, rather as if they were his regimental horses.

I have just had a long talk with the Colonel. He is a cultivated man, in the English way: that is to say, he knows some history, the names of plants and birds, something about gardening, a smattering of architecture. A type of man I like; we shall get on well. Apart from him, we know nobody in the neighbourhood. 'Yes, we do,' the children told me after exploring the park; 'we've got three friends already—a white horse, a brown cow, and a robin red-breast.'

I was afraid I might be cut off from books, but there are good bookshops at Guildford. This analysing of sentimental difficulties has been too much on my mind for a year now, and I feel a strong craving for moral healthiness. I thought instantly of Kipling, and spent this first morning, now sitting on the lawn in the sun, now strolling in the Monks' Walk, re-reading 'The Bridge Builders' and 'The Man who Would be King'. Yes, that was the right antidote. From the dangerous machinery of passion, man's escape lies through action. *Primum vivere*. If I had not a family, an organized life, I think my true happiness would have been a post as an intelligence officer in Morocco or an administrator in Indo-China. Time was when I had a great fondness for being the head of an industrial concern; but there I suffered from the unresolvable discords of the workers. A collective activity, believed in by all its participants—that, I think, is one recipe for happiness.

In the afternoon I took another Kipling, 'Puck of Pook's Hill', to read in this setting which has witnessed the passage, one after the other, of Saxons, Romans, Normans, the Canterbury pilgrims, and Kitchener's armies. In depicting the impact of the Roman world upon the British bar-



barians, he has obviously had in mind as model the impact of the English upon India. He is right. The passions of men are always more or less alike. . . . Kipling, it seems, lives not very far from here; I must see him. I liked him very much in London last year, when he talked to me so well about Cecil Rhodes. I emerged from this day of reading with all the admiration I felt for him in the days when I read him for the first time, at the age of thirteen.

AUGUST 3RD.—Some Boy Scouts have come to camp in our grounds; they are the sons of London working-class parents, in charge of an elderly scoutmaster with a white moustache. They have been working all day in clearing the river-bed of the black floating tree-trunks which were troublesome to boats. To-night they sat round a great fire of their own making, and sang. Our children went to listen to them. It is excellent, I think, this school of discipline with enthusiasm. We all sat down in the field, and our faces were lit up by the fire as in Rembrandt's 'Night Watch'. Long ago, in this same field, Chaucer's pilgrims halted to sing round just such a fire. The great art of the historian should be to extract the permanent from beneath the transitory, the 'everlasting man', in Chesterton's phrase. No doubt, man's nature evolves; certain sentiments and desires vanish; but who shall say whether some tragic happening, suddenly shattering the social framework, would not revive within us the ancestors we thought were dead? 'Our first movement is to murder those whom we hate.' The characters in 'Climats' are too civilized. My most dangerous weakness? Politeness.

AUGUST 5TH.—The past two days reading Trevelyan's 'History of England'. Greatly struck by the influence of armament on the political constitution of the country.

Power follows actual force. When the Norman baron brought over his methods of mounted warfare and the idea of the fortified castle, feudalism triumphed. In the fourteenth century the bow became the national weapon; every village graveyard had the butts behind it, whence Crecy, Agincourt, and the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. A little later the invention of the cannon brought about the downfall of the feudal baron, by making possible the destruction of his stone walls from a distance. On the sea, the idea of placing cannon inside the vessel so as to fire through port-holes decided England's superiority over Spain. Drake saw a man-of-war as a mobile battery, the Duke of Medina-Sidonia saw it as a platform designed to carry his musketeers to the boarding of another vessel. It was the broadside that made the British Empire. If we really wish to give the League of Nations the means of imposing peace, it must be given *force* and the power of irresistible control.

More reading Fauconnet's book on Spengler. At the moment I have neither the courage nor the time to make an attack on the text of the gigantic 'Decline of the West'. In any case, Fauconnet's analysis is made with much intelligence.

Essential idea: the relativity of all human ideas, even the mathematical. A system is never true, it is true for a given man at a given moment. One can grasp the possible thought of a Frenchman of 1795 or a German of 1917, but one does not grasp the possible thought of Man in general. 'Hegel, German philosopher (1770-1831)'—that defines his doctrine.

Certainly, Spengler is partly right. Descartes and Spinoza were philosophers who came on the scene after a period of great development in mathematics, and, yielding to an intoxicating wave of geometry, they strove to demonstrate

truth as theorems are demonstrated. Taine was born at a time of experimental triumphs, and yielded similarly to the materialist wave. His 'Theory of Intelligence' could not have been written in 1720, nor in 1920. Russell, whom I was reading the other day, and to some extent Bergson, have been moulded by the new physics. It will always be so, and no system in the world will be true for all men at all times. 'If Nietzsche had gone to reveal the Superman to the Moslems, and Kant his categories to the Chinese, they would both have realized the historical and geographical relativity of their ideas.'

But do we need a system? 'Life,' says Goethe, 'finds its end in itself, and laughs at what is thought of it.'

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The children are working on the garden table at their holiday tasks; I have my own. I have promised to write a continuation to Sterne's 'Sentimental Journey' for a series of 'Sequels to Famous Books'. That is to be my task for the month. Forced labour. I would far rather get back to my 'Byron'. I shall take on no more of these commissioned tasks. But promises already made must be kept. Let's try.

To start with, I shall have to put in a note somewhat on these lines:

'The reader will recall the last chapter of "A Sentimental Journey". Yorick has to spend the night in an Alpine inn alongside a young Piedmontese lady. Almost all the historians of literature are unaware of the fact that from that chapter a son was born. He was recognized by Yorick, and a family of Yoricks still survives in the little town of Sisteron, where travellers are astonished by this foreign name. The following narrative describes the first journey made by one of the French Yoricks to the land of his forbears.'

## A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY INTO ENGLAND

by

MONSIEUR YORICK

PARIS—NORD

—This much I like in starting upon a journey, said I, whilst the blue smock'd porter was stowing my port-manteau in the rack, this much I like, that it delivers us from fancied woes

What is an affront when he that offers it is distant a hundred leagues! What is love when the mistress is beyond reach! 'Tis only on our travels, I began again as I settled myself on the cushions, that we are truly ourselves. Here is Yorick—which is to say, a body, a few desires, a few memories,—and no longer Yorick's house, Yorick's servants, the friends and foes of Yorick, Yorick's legend, Yorick's fortune. No more goods to have care of, unless it be the six shirts and twelve handkerchiefs and four-and-twenty volumes within that case. No more visitors to dread, no more bells a-jangling. And on that instant, as the train gathered speed and slid over the groaning rails of the *Gare du Nord*, I resolved to set down the account of my journey and to make an instant start with a *Preface in the Compartment*—

## PREFACE IN THE COMPARTMENT

A traveller is a monk in motion. No convent of *Saint Bruno* has a rule of silence more strict than prevails in a carriage packed with strangers. How over-valued is the courage of those who vow themselves to solitude! They may dock themselves of small pleasures, but they free themselves from great torments. Now my own taste has

been ever for the monastic and cloistered life. I have viewed the Charterhouse of *Florence*—the cells of the Fathers are charming—their windows look across the Tuscan campagna, over roofs gleaming in the sunshine, and to the high mountains beset with cypress—each Father has his garden, a dark mass of olive trees lighten'd by the yellow of a lemon—and on the tables you may see books sacred or profane.—'Tis very true, said I to Stella, I have always thought it, and now I know, that I was made for solitude.—You! answered Stella laughing freely, you who crave for company at all hours of the day or night!—How little you know of me, Stella, said I sadly—for it is painful to be misread by a woman who—

And I had reached that point in my preface when I perceived a grave-featured young man who seemed to be coming in my direction. Sir—says he—are not you Yorick? Whereat I understood that I should not be travelling alone, which afforded me great relief.

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Enough for this morning. I am going down with the children to see the robin's nest and the trout in the weir.

AUGUST 7TH.—Working all morning on that pastiche of Sterne. It is difficult and I find it boring; there is something false in that naivety of style. If the draft does not shape better to-morrow, I shall drop it and try writing a continuation to the 'Pastiches et Mélanges' of Proust.

As consolation for these three stupidly wasted days, read a remarkable article by the Countess Vera Tolstoy on 'the original of Natasha' (the Natasha of 'War and Peace', of course). I knew already from the book by Tolstoy's son that

Natasha was largely formed from Tolstoy's sister-in-law, Tanya Kuzminsky (or, before her marriage, Tanya Behrs), but here I have found exact details.

Tanya was a coquette. In 1863 Tolstoy wrote to her: 'Tanya, my dear, you are young, pretty, gifted and kind. Take care of yourself and of your heart. Once given, a heart cannot be taken back, and a tortured heart keeps its scar.'

Tolstoy was fond of living amongst the patriarchal family of his parents-in-law, and made it into the Rostovs' interior in 'War and Peace'. In 1862 Countess Tolstoy was writing to her sister Tanya: 'I must tell you a great secret—Levoshka [Tolstoy's family name] intends to describe us when he is fifty.' He only waited till he was thirty-six. A writer's scruples subsiding when once the work is ripe.

Tanya's first love, at the age of fourteen, was for her cousin Kuzminsky. When she talked over the situation with him she held out her large doll, Mimi, placing the doll's leather arms on her cousin's shoulder. That was the scene between Natasha and Boris in 'War and Peace'.

The whole Behrs family watched the publication of the novel with deep feeling and also with some anxiety. When the first part appeared under the title of 'The Year 1805', a friend, Polivanov, wrote to Tanya: 'You will certainly have read "The Year 1805" and found plenty of acquaintances in it, yourself included . . . How much Natasha reminds one of you! In Boris there is something of me and . . . Is not Natasha's kiss also something out of real life? You have probably told him how you kissed your teacher.'

And Tanya replied: 'You ask me about Levoshka's tale. It is true that Boris has a little of yourself in him. . . . About Natasha he was quite frank with me "You think your life is pointless, do you?" he said to me. "Not at all, I am noting every bit of you." I am sorely afraid that he is also telling my adventure with Anatole. Papa is very angry, and

says: "Our friends will recognize Tanya, and that will do her harm." For my own part, I like his novel very much. Almost all the readers whose opinions I have heard, either do not like or do not understand Peter Bezukhov. . . . You think that Natasha's kiss comes from the time of our teacher? No, it was with Alexander Kuzminsky.'

The story of Anatole in 'War and Peace' is that of a real adventure of Tanya Behrs. Tolstoy did not even feel inclined to alter the name of the hero. Here is the actual story: When Tanya was sixteen a young man named Anatole S—— became attached to her, followed her everywhere, and spoke to her so freely that she came to believe that nobody understood her so well; above all, she felt pride in being regarded by him as a grown-up person. He was a brilliant youth, but unkind, yet Tanya loved him and believed herself happy. To her sister Sonia, Tolstoy's wife, she wrote: 'This week at St. Petersburg has been a fairy-tale.'

The Tolstoy family invited Tanya and her brother Alexander to spend the summer with them, inviting also Alexander Kuzminsky and the said Anatole S——, who was known to Tolstoy. The young man's cynicism was distasteful to Tolstoy, who one day ordered the carriage and, without any explanation, sent a servant to tell Anatole that the horses were waiting to take him to Tula. For a long time Tanya remained sorrowing, but she consoled herself when Tolstoy's elder brother, Uncle Serge, was in love with her. He was living with a gypsy woman by whom he had had several children. Uncle Serge remarked to his brother: 'Leo, Tanya is dangerously attractive. It would be as well if I didn't come here any more.' In 'War and Peace' the relations of Uncle Serge with Tanya became those of Prince Andrew with Natasha. Serge asked for her hand when she was seventeen; he himself was thirty-eight. The family asked them to wait for a year on account of Tanya's youth. 'A

whole year!' says Natasha in 'War and Peace', 'But why a year?' Then Uncle Serge's gypsy was informed, she wanted to kill herself, and seemed to be in such misery that Serge and Tanya felt it their duty to renounce their project of marriage. Tanya was very brave, but in despair. She spent whole days without saying a word. 'Tanya,' Tolstoy said to her, 'where are all your pretty ways? Come, give us a moment of old times.' Shaking her head, she smiled and answered: 'I can't. All men now are to me just like our old nurse Trefonova.' (In 'War and Peace', Natasha had lost all desire to attract, and had not even the need to contain herself; she said and felt then that no man interested her any more than Nastasia Ivanovna would have done)

From first to last, Tolstoy drew that character from the life, and it is the most successful of all his creations. This is a lesson which the prentice novelist should ponder. Pride, and the need for confidence in his own magic, will easily induce a writer to favour above all else the characters and scenes of his own invention. Tolstoy's example shows that the transposition must be made with a set of real data. Little by little the fictitious character diverges from the model and begins to take on a life of his own, and at last the umbilical cord can be severed.

AUGUST 9TH.—I have dropped my Sterne, which was intolerable, and for the past couple of days have been working most enjoyably on Proust. I am not quite satisfied with the opening, but after three pages the substance of the phrasing, at once fluid and arborescent, becomes (I think) fairly Proustian

Yesterday I took the children to Portsmouth and visited Nelson's flagship, *Victory*. They were delighted with the



town, which was beflagged on account of a royal visit. The spot on the deck where Nelson was killed by a French bullet is marked by an engraved brass plate. The English removed their hats. My boys did likewise. 'A pretty sight, sir,' said the sailor accompanying us, 'to see two little French boys taking off their caps to Lord Nelson.' As we came away I asked them: 'What was it you saw?'—'What did we see?' they said. 'Well, we saw the place where Napoleon died.'

This afternoon I climbed to the wood that is still called Chantry Wood because the Canterbury pilgrims used to sing as they went through it, and in the shade of St. Martha's chapel I read an American book, 'The Arcturus Adventure,' a very straightforward account of a naturalist's journey. I am fond of these observations of the habits of animals, mirrors of our human ways. Since learning that in the uttermost depths of the sea there are fish which can only exist so long as they are subjected to terrific pressures, and burst if they come up, I have wanted to write a story to be called 'Fish of the Great Depths'. I would show human individuals of extreme degradation who burst when they try to live in a purer atmosphere. I also find admirable the fact that certain blind fish carry in front of them a small light-producing organ which attracts their prey, and yet which they themselves will never see.

To live, every animal must perforce make an isolated niche for itself. As a species, an animal is calm and assured of survival as soon as it contrives to find happiness in something useless to other kinds. Sometimes the isolation is geographical (a species capable of living on the coldest or most desert islet lives in peace), but it can also be gastronomical, as in the case of vultures, whose sole rivals for carcasses are the jackals and certain insects. It can be a question of the hour of feeding, as with bats, or an optical

sanctuary, such as that of the insects whose resemblance to twigs makes them indistinguishable. The same law is true of mankind, the specialist lives because the other human specialists have no interest in preventing him from living. There are symbioses of specialists. In medicine, the general practitioner is linked to the ear nose-and-throat specialist like the big bumble bee to the orchid. The scholar who lives on corpses will respect the peace of the novelist, so long as the latter does not make attempts on his corpses, but will attack the biographer who comes a hunting on his particular isle. In Parliament the administrative bats do not vex the meals of the eagles of foreign policy.

The law of compensation is another that is shared by animals and humans. The animal which has some admirable feature is often made ludicrous by several other features. The albatross, godlike in the air, walks the earth like Charlie Chaplin, the peacock, an aristocrat in its array, is a suburban in its voice, that great artist, the nightingale, dresses like a gipsy. The poet always pays in one way or another. Byron is lame, Keats consumptive, Balzac is poor and ambitious, Stendhal is ugly—the law of compensation.

The author of this book, William Beebe, describes the love-making of the albatross. When a pair of albatrosses make love, they stand up face to face about a foot apart. Suddenly one of them raises its neck and utters a grunt. His partner mimics him. The two birds bow profoundly to each other three times, and then, crossing their beaks and rapidly moving their heads, they go through a kind of fencing, with closed mandibles. At the moment of supreme ecstasy, one of the albatrosses opens its mandibles and the beak of the other is thrust in. Whilst Beebe was observing a pair of albatrosses engaging in this play, a third bird approached, bowed and showed its desire to raise its neck and cry, but the others did not look at it and went on with their

ritual. The naturalist thereupon took up a position facing the spurned lover and made him a profound bow. The albatross looked a little surprised, returned the greeting three times with great solemnity, and then put his beak up towards Beebe's face. Then, realizing the impossibility of a clash of beaks, he moved away with an air of solemn distress.

At Cambridge, last spring, Professor G. took me to see some astonishing dramas of sentiment in his garden. He had there two Argentine geese, superb black birds with white ruffs, Spanish grandees painted by Velasquez, and with a comically dignified gait. 'When I brought them over,' said the Professor, 'I thought they were a pair, and I named them Don Carlos and Theolina. An odd mistake for a naturalist, for I soon realized that my birds were both males. The strange thing is that they appeared to share my mistaken belief. It may have been because they were the only specimens of their kind in Europe and found themselves condemned to a regrettable inversion, but the fact remains that Don Carlos paid shy court to Theolina.

'With springtime they became active and excited, and collecting materials, they skilfully and lovingly built a nest just like that of all their kind. And then, their work finished, they awaited the eggs, which naturally did not appear. Their despair was comical, but profound. For whole days these two male birds remained pining beside their sterile nest. At last Don Carlos had an idea; going to the hen-run, he stole an egg, and along with Theolina he tried hatching it. A chicken came out. The foster-parents seemed to be taken aback, and then to be very angry, and they killed the chicken with their beaks. Then seeing that they again appeared to be depressed, I tried offering them a peahen's egg. Rather suspicious, but still intent on their great project, Don Carlos and Theolina again hatched the egg. For my own part, I felt anxious; I did not know how

they would welcome the arrival of a little peacock. . . . But birds are like men, their pride overcomes all other passions. When they saw the gleaming plumage and the green and gold rings of the little bastard born to them, my two Spanish grandees were delighted. And for a whole summer I had the astonishing spectacle of a little peacock being taken out with solemn pride by a pair of Argentine ganders.

It was also Professor G. who introduced me to the White Pigeon Who Refused to Sit. 'You know of course,' he said, 'that amongst pigeons it is usual for both the male and female to sit on their eggs, taking turns of duty. One of them rests and fetches food whilst the other remains motionless on the nest, and then, after a reasonable time, the rôles are exchanged. Well, amongst my white pigeons this year I soon noticed that one pair was behaving abnormally. For two days the male and female had sat in the proper way, but on the third day the female did not turn up at the right time to take the male's place. Exhausted and surprised, he summoned her in all sorts of ways, but she was quite indifferent, apparently not hearing, and was flirting with another male. The situation was so interesting that I did not leave my white pigeons, and really it was quite a moving sight, because the deserted husband seemed to be torn between two conflicting emotions—anger on the one hand, which seemed to make him wish to leave his nest and attack the adulterous couple, and pre-paternal love on the other, which forbade him to let the eggs grow cold. As it turned out, he did not move. Before long the second couple likewise had eggs: the male seducer and the unfaithful lady began taking their turns of duty over this second clutch, in a nest placed only a few feet away from that in which the unhappy husband, had it not been for my aid, would have been dying of hunger. But what do you think

this female bird did? After twenty-four hours she grew tired of sitting on the future children of her lover, as she had tired of those of her husband. Once again she refused to take her place and play her part. And look at them now. . . .

And the Professor took me into a pigeon-house. Accompanied by a male bird, the female pigeon was strolling with an air of conceited, mischievous innocence, between two nests in which sat the two males, starving and exhausted, casting glances of impotent fury at each other from afar. The Professor gazed at her for a long time with scornful curiosity.

'A real lady of fashion!' he remarked.

AUGUST 12TH.—Kipling invited us to luncheon yesterday. There was no disappointment in store—the man is like his work. He lives in the lovely old house of a fifteenth-century iron-master; its wonderful garden is the one in which 'Puck of Pook's Hill' is placed. He led me over the brook beside which Dan met the Dwarf. All the elements of the scene are there, in this actual countryside. Like Tolstoy, Kipling looks at Nature (peering through those keen eyes under their huge eyebrows); he accepts Nature as he finds her, imposing on her that slight distortion caused by the passage through a particular sensibility, and transforming her into a work of art.

'How true to life your Roman soldiers are!' I remarked. 'One feels that things must have been exactly like that, along the great Wall of Hadrian, with those young tribunes, and that soldier spirit which has hardly changed ever since there have been men and they fought. . . . Did you get your inspiration from the outposts on the North-West Frontier?'

'Of course. . . . One always has to model the unknown with familiar material. . . . India is a good model.'

'How I loved "Kim"! I can't tell how often I've re-read it—twenty or even thirty times perhaps . . .'

'"Kim"? That was an easy job. . . . I had it all round me. But are there really young people in France who read my Indian stories?'

'Not only those, but "Stalky and Co.," and the "Plain Tales", and all the rest of them. . . .'

'In England the younger generation have rather moved away from me. They are looking for something different, and that's as it should be. If a young writer were unlucky enough to be over-fond of my books he would simply write Kiplingese, and would not find his own legs . . . Yes, certainly, the young must be rather unfair to their elders'

'You know the lines—

Young blood must have its course, lad,  
And every dog its day'

'Quite true. The years and the centuries must be left to discover what was solid and enduring in a literature.'

'But in your case,' I said, 'the pendulum is already swinging back. I have been to Oxford and Cambridge this year, and the young aesthetes are "discovering" you again.'

'Really?' he said 'No, it is too early. It would be a pity.'

The tone of his remarks has a strong tinge of humour. What ingenious fun he would make of Philippe Marcenat in 'Climats'! To him, the individual ought to be sacrificed to the collective and should find his happiness in the sacrifice. It is a bad hive where every bee is self-regarding and argues about the command of the species. Such hives ought to be burnt.

The dignity of his life commands respect for his ideas. He lives here, away in the country, far from the noise of his fame. 'One must learn to choose,' he says. A lesson for

Philippe Marcenat. In love too one must learn to choose, and, having chosen, play out the game without regrets. One must make a marriage, or a country, or a work, to the best of one's powers, without seeking the why and wherefore. And the drive home passed thus, in a reverie screened in fancy by Kipling's brushwood eyebrows.

AUGUST 13TH.—Worked well this morning: result of my Kipling day. I am making an inventory of the maxims of life which I believe to be sound. There are two of Disraeli's: 'Never explain, never complain'; and 'Life is too short to be small'. One should never regret what can't be changed, and always start from the present situation. Essentially it is what Descartes said: 'I have made it my habit to alter my desires rather than the order of the world, and to consider that what has not come about is, so far as I was concerned, an absolute impossibility.'

Choose.—Never sulk about your own actions.—Begin nothing without considered choice, and always finish what has been begun.—Never hate, but be able to fight nevertheless. (The maxim '*tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*' is true in the field of inner life, but false in the order of active life.)

Look for the best in everyone. I like those words of Cardinal Newman: 'It is almost a definition of a gentleman to say that he is one who never inflicts pain. . . . He has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. Nowhere shall we find greater candour, consideration, indulgence; he throws himself into the minds of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes.'

As a writer one should learn to admire 'It is a sure sign of mediocrity always to be moderate in one's praise.' I came across two fine remarks on that in Mark Rutherford this morning. One is from George Eliot, to the effect that denigration is an art within the reach of any donkey, and that what we need is to be taught to admire. The other is Goethe's 'If you have called a bad thing bad, you have done no great matter, but if you call a good thing good, you have accomplished much.'

That autobiography of Mark Rutherford's is very remarkable. The story of a man who received a puritan education, who ceased to believe and yet retained respect for the mode of life instilled in him, and especially for chastity. Puritanism is false, but contains the essence of something true. It can produce two types of men the Byron-Gide type, exasperated by the constraints they have undergone and avenging themselves by liberty of action while still remaining deeply imprinted with awareness of the Devil, and the Rutherford-Edmund Gosse type, men who pass judgment, but still admire, without active revolt. In this connection one should re-read 'Father and Son' and 'Si le grain ne meurt'. Besides, I shall have to re-read Gide in order to understand Byron properly. They have more than one point in common.

AUGUST 14TH—Worked during the morning on my Proust, which I am enjoying. After luncheon, a walk with the children over the heather up on Hindhead. They were delighted with a vast round bowl in the sand, several hundred feet deep and completely lined with heather. 'We must stay,' they said. 'It's so beautiful.' On returning I read an article by Bertrand Russell on the necessity of political scepticism. To ponder a piece of Russell's writing always gives me keen pleasure. I like that reso-



lute thought, boring right through to the base of the problem, and unhesitatingly bringing up to the surface whatever it finds. His idea in the article I have just read is a bold one:

All party politics consist of setting up one section of the citizens against the rest of the country, and of trying to make that section a majority. It follows that an idea which would unite all the citizens against the rest of the country, is useless to the politician. *The politician requires myths, of such a kind as to be pleasing to as large a group of men as possible, and displeasing to the other group.* For example, the reduction of taxation on small fortunes, complemented by a crushing tax on large fortunes, is a wonderful line to follow in politics.

These propositions lose their validity only in the case of a foreign war, because it is then possible to unite the whole country against the common enemy, and hatred finds satisfaction. But in times of peace the politician's art consists of understanding, not what is useful to the country, but what passions are easy to kindle. *The most honest politician could not have a solely constructive programme, inasmuch as that programme will never assure him of power.* If measures must be applied of a kind to ensure the safety of the country, that cannot be done by a party government. How, then, can reasonable politics be combined with democracy?

Is it by a government of experts? No. Because (a) democracy won't choose them. Because (b) the expert makes the mistake of thinking that *his* science, and his alone, is important: if the country were entrusted to a laryngologist, he would cut out everybody's tonsils. Because (c) the expert has no understanding of vulgar passions. Because (d) he overlooks the impossibility of enforcing an unpopular law: a financial expert, for instance, might be conscientiously convinced that taxes on salaries were necessary; but he could not obtain their payment. And because (e), although the

expert not being in power, strikes us as more tolerable than the demagogue, if he were in power he would doubtless become a tyrant

What, then, is to be done? It is certain that modern societies are feeling an urgent need to alter their mode of governance. For over two hundred years politics has been based on sentiments (envy or hatred) which have had their uses in the struggle against classes that were too powerful and too sure of themselves, but are becoming dangerous in a great industrial society, for this society can live only by the co-operation of all the citizens. The life of a great capital like Paris, London or New York, is a miracle sustained only by the very unstable equilibrium set up by the efforts of hundreds of varied organisms. Revolution would mean our starvation. But like the beavers shut up in a library who, at the time of the floods, started to build dykes on the floor with books, we ourselves are following political methods which at the present time have become absurd as they correspond with the standards of a pre-industrial age.

The War proved the possibility of abandoning those methods of inciting the proletariat against the ruling classes and the ruling classes against the proletariat—methods which, through fear and apathy, actually lead to war. During the War, confronted by a common foe, every country managed to attain, with no alloy of hatred, a marvellously effective national socialism. But in peace time those same standards would be condemned, by proletarians as inadequate, and by the propertied classes as vexatious. So long as there is not a new generation trained to forswear hatred, the desire to hurt our enemies will be stronger than the desire to do good to ourselves.

The first aim of any great statesman, therefore, should be to see that children are brought up in an atmosphere of national co-operation, and meanwhile to concentrate hatred

against the politicians and not against any single class within the nation. The peoples are ripe for such a form of hatred, and it would become a moral equivalent for war, from which, for a time, it would release us. Government is only possible through myths. But neither the Marxian nor the conservative myth is the sole efficacious one. The myth of organized planning is quite capable of acquiring a quasi-religious influence for a hundred years, and this would be excellent. After that something else will have to be sought.

Such is the Russell theme. It is brilliant. I can anticipate, however, a democrat's reply: 'That myth of government against the rich classes is far from having exhausted its useful consequences. There is still enough inequality to bear a century of battling against it.' Possibly. For my own part, I believe that mankind's true enemy is neither the Rich Man nor the Politician, but the remnant of inhuman forces in the universe. Physical suffering, war, poverty—these are enemies formidable enough, one would think, for men to be grouped against them. The part for writers to play is to call to mind this cruelty of a harsh and indifferent world. That is why great pessimistic books leave behind them a sense of serenity.

AUGUST 16TH.—Began the 'Life of Robert Louis Stevenson' by Sir Graham Balfour. At the beginning of the lives of great novelists there is nearly always a period of contacts with numerous and diversified classes of people. It was so with Balzac, Stendhal and Dickens, and it was so with Stevenson in Edinburgh. During his early years he sought the company of 'seamen, chimney-sweeps and thieves'. Amongst these people he was known as 'Velvet Coat', and amongst them he found the types which enabled him to write 'Treasure Island'. The curious thing in him was that the will to write was anterior to the gift of writing. 'I kept

always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in. As I walked, my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words; when I sat by the roadside, I would either read, or a pencil and a penny version-book would be in my hand, to note down the features of the scene or commemorate some halting stanza. Then I lived with words. And what I thus wrote was for no ulterior use; it was written consciously for practice. It was not so much that I wished to be an author (though I wished that too), as that I had vowed that I would learn to write. That was a proficiency that tempted me, and I practised to acquire it, as men learn to whistle, in a wisp with myself. Description was the principal field of my exercise, for to anyone with senses there is always something worth describing, and town and country are but one continuous subject. But I worked in other ways also; often accompanying my walks with dramatic dialogues, in which I played many parts; and often exercised myself in writing down conversations from memory.

'Whenever I read a book, or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there were either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful, and I knew it, and tried again and was again unsuccessful, and always unsuccessful; but at least in these vain bouts I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction and the co-ordination of parts.

'I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire and to Obermann.'

He frequently re-wrote one story in the style of several different authors. 'That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write. It was so Keats learned, and there was never a finer temperament for writing than Keats'.'

Another sound idea expressed by Stevenson is that a writer ought to work every day and not wait for inspiration. He says that the lives of Goethe and Balzac taught him much from that point of view. I think this is true. A writer thinks only on paper. Reverie is good, but it should be a material already sketched in the rough. Reverie entirely lacking in object is totally unproductive. A writer can extract a good novel from a detestable tale. But out of nothing, nothing can come. This pastiche of Proust, undertaken against the grain, gives me several ideas for possible novels.

Another book begun last night: Jung on 'The Unconscious'. I find Jung more remarkable than Freud, as being less inclined to harp on one string. To both of them the clash with one's self is the sign of the civilized man. An inevitable clash. The social man is an animal; he has retained animal instincts and desires, and suffers from being obliged to repress them. But at the same time the human animal is social, and morality has become one of his instincts. Morality is not extraneous to man; it is not something given one day on Sinai to a creature who had never thought about these problems. Morality has taken shape slowly; like all human instincts, it is a product of evolution. The immoral man is always a neurotic subject. His attempts at self-liberation by satisfying his animal desires at the expense of his social obligations are futile. If he does so, he suffers from a 'repression of morality' no less painful than the repression of sexuality. That is the whole story of Byron.

AUGUST 18TH.—To-day we had a pleasant visit from Thornton Wilder, the American writer, unknown until his recent fame as the author of 'The Bridge of San Luis Rey'.

An ingenious theme the old osier bridge of San Luis Rey, near Lima, breaks one day (about the end of the eighteenth century), just when five people were crossing it. Hurléd into the ravine, they perish. An old monk who saw the accident wonders why God sanctioned these deaths, and for the strengthening of his faith he proposes to seek out the causes in the lives of these five people . . . The sobriety of style reminded one of certain French classics, particularly of Mérimée.

A charming man, quite young. 'I'm thirty,' he told me, 'like all writers of twenty-six.' He holds a university post.

'My weakness is that I am too bookish,' he said. 'I know little of life. I made the characters of "The Bridge" out of the heroes of books. My Marquesa is the Marquise de Sévigné. In my first novel, "The Cabala," the hero was Keats. The method has served me well, but I don't want to use it again. I shall not write again before I have actually observed men better.'

'And on what subject?'

'It hardly matters. Don't you think that in the whole of the world's literature there are only seven or eight great subjects? By the time of Euripides they had all been dealt with already, and all one can do is to pick them up again. He took them from history, or from foreign tales. Have you ever studied the sources of Shakespeare? I believe that the only character he created himself was Ariel in "The Tempest".' (I've never understood why certain critics should stand amazed at Shakespeare's erudition or find it extraordinary in an actor. After all, Shakespeare was not a 'humble player', he lived at court. All his erudition is to be found in the little books which were to his age what bookstall volumes are to ours.) 'The Romans took their subjects from the Greeks, Molière from the Romans, Corneille from the Spaniards, Racine from Corneille and the

Bible. . . . Ibsen seems to me the only dramatist who has really invented themes, and isn't that just his real greatness? No, there is nothing new that a writer can hope to bring except a certain way of looking at life. . . . In my own case, for instance, what I seek everywhere is the mask under which human beings conceal their unhappiness.'

'So you think that all human beings are unhappy?'

'In social life, yes, all of them—in varying degrees. . . . They are solitary, they are consumed with desires which they dare not satisfy; and they wouldn't be happy if they did satisfy them, because they are too civilized. No, a modern man cannot be happy; he is a conflict, whether he likes it or not.'

'Even those tanned, ruddy Englishmen with their boyish eyes?'

'Just like the rest. And the proof is that they have humour. Humour is a mask to hide unhappiness, and especially to hide the deep cynicism which life calls forth in all men. We're trying to bluff God. It is called polish. . . . Our young people in America, it seems to me, express that cynicism more honestly than most Europeans do. Freud has helped them a lot.'

'But also spoilt them a lot. . . . In Freud there is a sexual obsession which simply is not true of the majority of men. . . .'

'Possibly. . . . There, again, I answer "possibly" just to please you. Sexual life is so important.'

The whole afternoon passed in pleasant conversation. He talked very well about music, especially about Bach. Then of the theatre.

'I saw "Le Misanthrope" in Paris the other day,' he said, 'but I was disappointed in the acting. They made Célimène into a most unattractive coquette. . . . No. . . . The terrible thing about Célimène is that she was very nice.'

'I once thought of writing C  lim  ne's diary,' I told him. 'It would have shown that her "betrayals" were often, in her own eyes, merely attempts to plicate Alceste and make him happy.'

About five o'clock he rose. Unfortunately we shan't see him again. He is going for a walking-tour with Gene Tunney, the boxer.

'A strange companion.'

'Don't think that. I'm very fond of him.'

AUGUST 22ND.—We discovered yesterday that Box Hill, the little country-house where Meredith lived so long, is quite near us here. So of course we went over. I know few pleasures more acute than a literary pilgrimage, made to a spot consecrated by the presence of a great man. A deep affection for letters produces the same effect as love. The sight of a certain bush, or a certain stone bench, kindles strong emotions in the visitor, because Marcel Proust plucked a sprig of hawthorn from that bush, or because Madame de R  camier sat on that bench beside Chateaubriand. You bring with you the books appropriate to recall or to read again; a page that hitherto has been cold and obscure becomes clear and human; if the actual landscape does not come up to that described by the artist, you enjoy the realization of that beautiful distortion to which genius submits Nature, and if you have been able to choose worthy companions for your pilgrimage, conversation is stimulated, as if the *genius loci*, evoked by genuine piety, returned to mingle for one evening with these kindly reveries in earthly scenes.

Here we were escorted by a niece of Meredith (a most attractive French face, a Vulliamy of Monancourt). She showed us the log summer-house, a sort of Swiss chalet, which was Meredith's study, and described him to us, his



vigour, his eloquence, his habit of teasing. Last night I was re-reading the opening of 'Richard Feverel'. Ramon Fernandez is right in his belief that the philosophy of Meredith is the one we have most need of in this time of over-acute sensibilities. Observation, not feeling. . . . Man's rôle in Nature should be active. . . . Once again the teaching of Alain, and of Kipling. The difficulty is to find the strength to apply it. Meredith himself was torn between a romantic sensibility and a will to create. But, as he says, we must not grant an exaggerated value to the conventions or to worldly respect; we must not allow our selfish emotions to outweigh the great realities of a noble, active, passionate life. A gust of fresh air to sweep away spurious grievances. I should like my next novel to have more air moving in it than 'Climats' had. I like the life we lead in this countryside. I see only children, animals, streams and trees. I haven't heard a bitter or mischievous remark for a month past. I have walked, run and rowed. When I found a good book I was able to read it right through and with relish. In a word, I have been alive. And yet such retreats are healthy only if they are not too long. Meredith wrote his best books before Box Hill.

First sentence of Meredith in the letter announcing his marriage: 'I shall work better than ever.' There speaks the true writer as lover!

AUGUST 28TH.—Visit to our friends the S.s, near Richmond. In the evening they opened a small box containing family relics. Amongst them I found a letter written by one of their ancestors to his wife in 1746, on the eve of the Battle of Culloden, in which the writer of the letter was to die. It is so fine that I want to transcribe it. Coming after that conversation with Thornton Wilder, it made a striking impression on me, reminding me of the happiness that *it* can find in a certain purity. It is perfectly true that a cyni

brute lies asleep deep within us, but the Princesse de Clèves exists, and Dominique.—

My dear, I am just now come to my Quarters, it is about Eleven at Night. There is nothing in my mind, but God, and you. I cannot go to Bed until I tell you, that I never think myself entire but when I am with you. I would be very happy if I could now Lye Down in your Arms. I shall Lye down with regret: With no more Comfort, than my Conscience can afford. I Bless God for the peace of mind I have. And for the gracious assistance he has given me, by you. Our engagements are such, that we must be Happy, or not, in Excess; I do think that Indifferency, if ever we allow it to Enter our Minds, would soon turn to Hate. You do give me, and can continue to me, all the pleasure that a Wife I Love can give; you afford me all the Happiness that a Virtuous Companion can produce in a mind already full of you. It is in your power, to make me more miserable than I can tell you, it is beyond Expression, it is more than possibly you can Imagine. I am satisfied of the Truth and Strength of our Affection and hope it shall end only with Life itself. In the strictest Truth of my Heart, I assure you, I am wholly yours.

Now I am just going to Bed. I know not if ever I shall Sleep; or if I do Sleep, I know not if I shall ever Awake, it may be the Sleep of Death. I thank God for his past Mercies. I beg a Continuance of them. I cannot breathe once, without them. This is a Serious Subject, but it is what one will reflect upon, if we die as we would wish, not a sudden Death. From which Good Lord deliver us.

God Bless you and our Dear Boy. I am

Your affectionate and faithfull Husband,

THO<sup>s</sup> WEDDERBURN.

To-morrow we start on a Byronic pilgrimage of several days. We are going to Harrow, and then to Newstead Abbey.

AUGUST 29TH. — Harrow-on-the-Hill. The red brick School buildings are very plain. I liked the graveyard and that stone where Byron used to go and sit. The very wide view was veiled with haze. The name on the tomb is PEACHEY. Who was this Peachey over whom Byron meditated so often? In the class-room with its oak woodwork he has carved his name thrice. One can recognize his Napoleonic 'B' and the peculiar formation of his 'y'. The Library contains a portrait of Byron as a child; he was already handsome, whatever the majority of his biographers may say. The features are perfect in their regularity, the hair a light reddish colour, the eyes wonderful. I can see him limping along the cobbled path of the graveyard, Clare on one side, the Duke of Dorset on the other.

A long journey north. Old, flowery villages. Posting inns with handsome red-and-black signs. At last, Nottingham. A glance at that gloomy street near the castle, where the quack Lavender kneaded poor Byron's legs. In the village of Hucknall Torkard we found the church where he is buried. As he requested, the stone bears the single word, BYRON. The sexton tells us that for five centuries all the Byrons were buried in that vault. 'Wherever you walk,' he said, pacing the choir, 'here, and there, it's full of Byrons.' He is very proud of this litter of Byrons. The eating-house opposite the church is called the Byron Fish and Oyster Bar.

We set off for the Abbey. It comes into view at a turn of the road. Of the church, a ruin, nothing remains but a tall ogival façade through which the trees are visible. The main body of the building is intact. It is a place that one loves at first sight with a curious fondness. We cannot tear our-

selves away. I now understand Byron's attachment to his domain. 'Newstead and I stand or fall together.' The pleasure of finding all the expected relics. Here are the miniature forts built by the Wicked Lord, and the avenue of yew trees where the monks paced, reading their breviaries, the fine tomb of the dog Boatswain, Byron's oak (a trunk cut to a man's height on which he liked to write), and the tree on which he and Augusta carved their initials. In Byron's room, portraits of the old servant Murray, and of Jackson, the boxer. Beside it, the haunted room. We spoke to some English friends of renting Newstead for a summer. 'Don't do that. It's full of ghosts'—'But I should like to meet Byron's ghost.'—'Yes, but think of your poor children!'

Between Newstead and Annesley (Mary Chaworth's home), we follow the long line of trees that joins them. Here is the Diadem Hill, crowned with trees, from the top of which Mary scanned the fields for Jack Musters, her betrothed, whilst Byron, poor Byron, watched Mary's eyes. The house is still occupied by a descendant of the Chaworth-Musters'. Mrs. Musters showed us the door at which Byron fired his pistol: the wood is riddled with bullets.

'Have you a portrait of Mary Chaworth?'

The 'Morning Star of Annesley' had a kind, tender look. How valuable it is to place real pictures beneath the accounts of history! Everything seems to take on consistency and strength. Evening was falling. We went to take a last look at the walls of Newstead in the twilight. Byron loved that hour when the bats flit under the bare vaulted roof of the church. To-day it is roofless. Coming out we looked at the great oak which the neighbours saved from the Wicked Lord. It was here that Mrs. Byron halted one day in 1798. The nurse, May Gray, had the boy Byron on her knee, and the child was deeply moved to know that in a few minutes he would at last be seeing a castle of which he was the lord.

. . . The very spot, the same tree. George Gordon Byron, a boy with russet hair, rested his eyes on that bush. And that stout woman, her arms laden with bracelets, rolling her r's. . . . It all seemed suddenly so real to me that for a moment I forgot that these things were happening a hundred and thirty years ago. Yes, there *are* ghosts at Newstead.

OCTOBER 2ND.—On deck. A clear sky, very pale blue on the horizon, bright overhead. From Dover the French coast could be seen. I feel that I am returning transformed and soothed. For some weeks past all my reading has brought me back to one central idea—*you can make your own life*. 'God leaves us to ourselves.' My companion during those recent months, Byron, with his belief in Fate, almost the unique source of his unhappiness, has joined in teaching me. I began yesterday an admirable book of Eddington's, 'The Nature of the Physical World'. We are far from the mechanistic universe of Adrien Sixte or Taine. To the modern scientist a man's destiny is no more determined than are the movements of a molecule; the laws of history, like those of physics, can only be statistical, and this leaves the individual free. An insurance company can accurately forecast how many men of a particular generation will be living in fifteen years' time, but of what will happen to a particular man it knows nothing. Exact though mortality tables may be, it is useful to teach children that they will be run over if they walk in front of cars, and this teaching will modify the life-duration of those who learn it. Human will is restored to its place in the world. The universe is hard to penetrate and heavy to move, but it is indifferent. Every man can fashion his own niche therein. 'It is because destiny is immutable that our fate is in our own hands.'

And what is to be made of this liberty, a real thing, but in the last resort a matter of thought? 'Life is too short to

be small ' Not one moment should be lost in hating those who hate us Not one thought should be given to our enemies which could be given to our friends We must not be made the slaves of ambitions and needs which we do not feel and which common men seek to suggest to us in order to hold us During these weeks in London I was happy in a life stripped of all trappings I rented a small room near the British Museum Every day, from nine to one, I worked in that vast room, the circular form of which is so favourable to work, because, wherever you look, your eye finds nothing to catch hold of and is thrown back on to your desk I lunched in clean and humble restaurants, sitting at small tables with clerks and typists A novel on my knee, a cup of tea, a slice of ham, two pennyworth of jam An hour's stroll round the chessboard squares of Bloomsbury, in the midst of that foreign crowd is heedless of my activities as the waves are of an swimmer's Then work again, from two to six The wonderful solitude of a great city

The air on deck here smells of damp wood brine, and pitch Two lines are running one after the other round my mind one is Mallarmé's

*Le ten're le vif et le bel aujourd'hui*

and the other is Madame de Noailles', I think—

*L'endue alien our est enfantine et nette*

The pale sea shows hardly a wave, a smooth surface ruffled by faint tremors like those on the close-trimmed coat of a slightly winded horse What does one need for happiness? A patch of blue sky overhead, mildness in the air, and peace of mind

Calais A great wave, washing up as we enter, runs leaping alongside us between the jetties, a dog scampering at the vessel's side

## CHELSEA WAY: PROUST IN ENGLAND\*

IT was during a dinner at the Pré Catelan that I learned from M. de Norpois how the government of the Republic had decided to recall him to the active list, and send him to London at the head of the French delegation to the Conference on Air Armaments. In congratulating the ex-Ambassador, I made a point of mentioning that I had long been anxious to see London, and that his presence in England might well induce me at last to undertake the journey. He replied, I think, that the work of the Conference would unfortunately leave him scanty leisure, but I was hardly listening, as my attention had for a moment been engaged in observing the solo violinist, who, boldly cutting loose from the orchestra and wandering out among the tables like some venturesome and resonant outpost, still with amazing precision, remained in unison with the rhythm and movement of his colleagues, all as if some invisible headquarters-staff, by veiled and exact instructions, had maintained liaison between this mobile patrol and the main body of the melodious forces. With the closing bars of each piece, the violinist bowed in the direction of the blonde American ladies whose brightly coloured gowns enframed the glazed wooden platform, lowering his bow as if saluting with a sword, and then turned back to his comrades, who were waiting with calm curiosity for him to bring back a report about the enemy whose pink camp-fires they could discern

\* Marcel Proust himself, in his *pastiches* of Flaubert, Saint-Simon and others, showed that these exercises can help a writer to understand a style different from his own—and one that he admires.—A.M.

beneath the far-off bushes, and so enable them to launch a new offensive of harmony. With his head thrown back and eyes dim with happiness, he turned the caresses of his responsive bow on to the great air from 'Pagliacci' or from 'Samson', and one felt that under cover of these long, sustained, insistent notes, he was inwardly and securely violating the hearts of those haughty damsels, like some Julien Sorel, schooled in the Conservatoire, reading a doubtful love-tale to the proud Mathilde de la Môle. But as ten o'clock drew near, there loomed up behind the musicians several large negroes in dinner-jackets, whom the fiddler watched with a look of anguish so affecting that, when one white-eyed giant of these blacks placed a saxophone beside the violoncello and a drum beside the viola, it seemed to me as if a really despairing and quite beautiful grief were lending its nobility to the waltz he played, which was a very antiquated pre-War favourite; for there is no music that is absolutely bad; through even the flimsiest, an impassioned player can say all that there is to say, and we ourselves are that player when, deeply stirred by some grave personal misfortune, we transfer our own distress, and thereby a genuine and affecting beauty, to the jingle of a hurdy-gurdy or the raw symphony of a wayside fair.

Precisely on the first stroke of ten o'clock, one of the negroes, who, erect and resplendent, had been dominating this picture like the black slave standing in the foreground of Lorenzo the Magnificent's procession in the fresco of Benozzo Gozzoli, laid hold of the drumsticks, bent forward, and proclaimed with a loud, long-drawn rattle of the drum that the days of easy languid life and artlessly voluptuous phrases were over, that the fierce, streaked, mechanical hour of swift rhythms, of skyscrapers and streamline cars, had struck at last. Across the tables that throbbing rolled as the drums of mobilization had rolled over France fourteen



years earlier; even in the most secluded bushy corners, its sustained, muffled energy tightened the muscles of bodies limp in the softening languors of peace, and made warrior Amazons of those pale madonnas of the luminous gloom.

'I do not disguise from myself,' said M. de Norpois, 'how complex are the duties of a French emissary in England. Nevertheless, he can, I think, steer his barque safely through somewhat menacing reefs provided he keep two guiding principles in sight—the first, that he is representing France, the second, that he is representing her in England, which amounts to remembering, on the one hand, that he is charged with the acceptance of our government's views by a friendly but dissimilar nation, on the other, that he must interpret to the former the frequently peculiar (and to a Frenchman, most surprising) ideas of the Foreign Office. And pray note that I say, in speaking of France, "our government", and in speaking of England, "the Foreign Office", and not "the Cabinet"—no, nor even "10 Downing Street"; and I draw this distinction of set purpose, for the permanent officials of the Foreign Office have their own policy, one which is often successfully opposed to that of the Cabinet.'

But I was no longer listening to the Ambassador, my whole attention being absorbed by the fascinating and manifold spectacle which the orchestra was by now presenting to me. As soon as that prolonged kettle-drumming rattled out, as if to give warning of the Last Judgment or the perils of the triple somersault, the solo violinist was apparently seized by some mortal, animal fear, rather as the flies which a cruel, heartless keeper thrusts into the metal cage to be devoured by the chameleon, and which, at sight of the monster, cling vainly to the farthest corners of the walls. Thus my violinist (who was not unlike Morel, but could not be Morel, who would not have been playing in a restaurant), ever since observing the entrance of the negroes, had borne

his languishing melodies away amongst the farthest tables, even away beneath the firs of the Bois, as if hoping that in colonies so remote from the metropolis, barely even linked to it by far-travelling *maîtres d'hôtel*, he could perhaps maintain a tenderly Pucciniesque regime for yet awhile after the wild tambourining revolution of the Pré Catelan. But the negroid rattling had drowned his phrases as Santerre's drums did the voice of the dying King Louis, and the extremity of his alarm reminded me suddenly of all the heroes of story and legend tortured by the dawn of some tremendous day of reckoning, of Faust or of Peter Schlemihl at the hour when their souls are claimed by an infernal and ruthless creditor, or of Cinderella on the night of the ball when the twelve strokes of midnight ring out.

He stopped short and hastened over to the band, and I imagined, seeing him lean over to the Benozzo Gozzoli negro, that he had managed to extract a promise from his black conquerors to let him triumph just once again, as he came forward, blissful and triumphant, and began with an all-too-tender stroke of his bow on '*Plaisir d'amour ne dure qu'un moment. . .*' But his pleasure was briefer even than that of love, which is not so very short (being not, as is supposed, the pleasure of making love, but that of experiencing it), because suddenly a little fury-faced monster with a napkin in his hand, conjured up by the first tearful notes, sprang upon the musician and held out his watch with a gesture of domineering brutality. Pursued by this monster, who was the manager, the fiddler and '*Plaisir d'amour*' backed away towards a yawning doorway (that of Hell, no doubt) which engulfed the musician, whilst the infernal gnome, with an imperious flick of his napkin, unleashed the negroes, who were joined, as I noticed with feelings of scorn, by a traitor to white music in the person of the violoncellist, who now became the diminutive prop of a

gigantic silver instrument from which he drew certain discordant sounds.

'The mission with which I have been honoured,' said M. de Norpois, 'will be made a trifle easier for me by the fact that France and England no longer possess either divergent interests or common and disputed zones of influence. No French statesman nowadays has any serious thought of reviving our claims to Egypt, still less to Canada. As for an attack on India, that is for the moment placed in the sphere, if not of impossibilities, at least of improbabilities, both by reason of the inadequate radius of flight possessed by the machines in actual use, and by the temporary impracticability of maintaining subsequent supplies. . . .'

But the voice of the jazz-band swamped that of the Ambassador in my ears, just as for the fair Americans it had swamped that last plaint of the violinist, and powerless to hear anything else, I observed the strange exactness with which it evoked the rhythm and movements of love. Admittedly, this was no fresh observation, and I recall how, being at a concert one evening with Saint-Loup, I had analysed a Beethoven symphony and discovered how it moved forward through phases of repose, resumption, and torment, towards the crowning deliverance of perfect accord, as a pair of lovers towards that brief shock which will mark the simultaneous term of their pleasure and their pain, but comparing the songs of my doomed violinist with the synopated twitchings of the negroes, these two musics seemed to correspond with two conceptions of love, the one romantic and factitious, seeking to believe in a perfection of understanding between bodies and souls, in the unbroken classic progression of sentiments, a conception expressed in the melodic simplicity of Puccini, of Gounod, and even of Schubert, the other cynical and realist, accepting fitfulness as a law of love which it seeks amid the wailing dissonance

of a unique and elsewhere undiscoverable rhythm, a doctrine transposed with stern clarity into a language of sound by the short, panting, spiteful confession of saxophone and drum.

Meanwhile, there began to roam among the tables certain dark and restless animals, their eyes seeking a prey in the darkness. They emerged thus every evening, at the hour of the violinist's withdrawal, just as the darting of bats succeeds that of the swallows, or as the tiger goes questing at nightfall. These prowling, famished beasts were the professional dancers. And I noticed that, like all carnivora they preferred their prey plump. They did not go over to those delicious, parti-coloured nests of pink and green and blue girls twittering round the lake-side tables, but kept peering into the gloom of the jungle to find some quadragenarian bovine, tethered to the base of a striped parasol by a halter of large pearls. Our table was on the boundary-line between the hunting-grounds of two of their number, and when they passed close to each other I could observe a strange glance of hatred and complicity. For a long time I wondered why both their bodies seemed to incline in one direction, as if in fear of reprisal from some harsh and invisible master, a master whose hiding place seemed to be hinted at by their deflected glances, just as the warped apple-trees on the plateau of Méséglise, all leaning towards the same quarter, serve, even in calm weather, to point the direction of the prevalent winds, or again, just as street-walkers, hurrying alongside the passers-by in the yellow shadows of nocturnal streets, will reveal, by the unconscious orientation of their anxiety, the lurking-place of the pimp who is keeping his eye on them. And at last, by gauging the exact angle of fear of these dancers, whom every cheek made thinner and more avid, I espied, half-hidden behind a tree, the diabolic little manager, his flapping napkin giving them reminders of the pains of Hell and the wretchedness of

their lot, like those cruel winged spirits who mingle sometimes on the canvases of Breughel with the throng of the living.

So deeply interested had I been by this spectacle that I did not notice that M. de Norpois, contrary to his general habit, had for some time been sitting silent, apparently in expectation of a reply from me. Not knowing what he had said to me, I asked whether he would be seeing Desmond Farnham, the novelist, in London, and whether he had read his books, of which I myself was fonder than of any author's then living.

'I know Farnham's name very well,' he said. 'He is a brother of Lord Shalford, and I have heard mention of him in Rome, Vienna, Tokio, and Paris as well, for he belonged at one time to the service and has been stationed in all these capitals. He is, I believe, a gifted fellow, but I have not read his novels myself, although excellent judges assure me that they are remarkable. For my own part, I must admit, I remain loyal to Walter Scott and Dickens, and especially to Thackeray, who to my mind represents the essence of the English spirit (but no doubt I ought to say "British" for the author of "Waverley" was a Scotsman, and you know the strong attachment of the two races to nationalist distinctions, which nevertheless are no bar to close understanding, for the United Kingdom could not be described as a house divided against itself, although up in Scotland in the days when I had the honour of being invited to Balmoral by King Edward the Seventh, I have frequently heard natives of the Northern Kingdom, when they were going to England speak of "going out of the country" . . .).'

But seeing that the Ambassador was again well under way, and in no danger of stopping for a considerable time, I passed the remainder of the evening in watching my violinist, whom I had descried sitting gloomily behind the jazz-

leaders, like a captive king fettered in the train of a conquering barbarian's triumph.

Although M. de Norpois had scored a great diplomatic success in contriving to bring that evening at the *Pré Catelin* to a close without having invited me to pay him a visit in London, I nevertheless made the crossing a few days later. The name of a train on the lips of Bloch (a frequent visitor to London, where his plays were performed with much success) had abruptly decided me to undertake a journey both distant and formidable in my eyes. This train was called the 'Golden Arrow', a name which evoked that symbolic and delicious arrow of gold to which Sainte-Beuve longed to fasten his equivocal friendships, and that Zeno, 'cruel Zeno, Zeno of Elea', whose swift, motionless arrow I could fancy linking with its quivering, gilded streak the sandy dunes of Calais and the white cliffs of Dover. Unable, alas, to bring Albertine, I had persuaded Andrée to vouchsafe me her company, and we started together from the *Gare du Nord* by that splendid midday train, which, by the central, culminating and majestic hour of its departure, set there in the middle of the day like a royal box in the middle of the sweep of a balcony, acquires a glimour over and above that of the winged emblems on its long blue coaches.

There could be no doubt that this crowd on the platform was already an English crowd, and for a long time Andrée and I kept wondering what gave it this undeniable British character, for men nowadays are dressed exactly alike in every country in the world, and Englishwomen wear clothes bought in the *Rue de la Paix* or the *Champs-Élysées*, and yet, now in the train as later on the deck of the boat, as we sit beside our suit-cases in the midst of a huge encampment where squatting families watched over the tribal baggage, whilst our tongues could feel the salt tang of the sea on our lips, our minds, little by little absorbing these unknown

faces, were quite unmistakably tasting the flavour of England, a flavour which came partly from the types around us, for the males of the Continent can never show those bright pink complexions on which a white moustache stands out pure and snowy, as the brittle, lunar peak of a lofty mountain will stand sometimes against a rosy sunset sky, and partly too from the clothes, for although a 'foreigner' can attire himself in tweedy clothing, yet, on him, its very informality has a touch of affectation and deliberateness, whilst it is only on the English that this carelessness is really unstudied, and therefore elegant. Near us on the deck was an old lady, wearing a grey dust-coat and crowned with an incredible hat of green tulle, who looked so lamentable a figure that Andrée, convinced that she must be on the first-class deck by mistake, was commiseratingly awaiting the arrival of the boat's ticket-inspector and his doubtless gruff expulsion of the poor old beggarwoman to the steerage. I reassured Andrée, and advised her to go over and read the name painted in white letters on the old lady's luggage surrounding her where she sat. A moment later Andrée returned, slightly confused, and told me that the bags belonged to the Duchess of Surrey, who was, of course, a cousin of the King's, and that the old lady must be a maid. But I told her that I thought that this was the Duchess in person, and actually it will be seen that I proved to be right when I met her during a week-end at Lord Shalford's.

Behind us the French coast became paler and more faint, in the same degree as the English coast ahead of us grew sharper and more distinct, so that I seemed to be watching some mysterious transfusion of strength, such as one can see taking place in some of those cruel and fantastic films in which the scientist, with his long alchemist's beard and surgeon's overall, makes use of a living woman to animate a statue, and one sees the beautiful body outstretched on the

table becoming limp and collapsed whilst the artificial creature opens its eyes, comes to life, and smiles all round. Thus it seemed as if that romantic castle, rising clearer every instant in the white Dover cliffs, were fashioned of the flesh and blood of the Calais watch-tower and the lighthouse of Cape Gris-Nez.

This crowd on the boat differed also from a Continental crowd in two rather subtler characteristics, one being its relative good-humour, not marked by any positive action, yet apparently permeating all the social relationships of this mobile gathering. A smile came into spontaneous being on every face one met. The Pullman official, for instance, moving to and fro along the deck in his blue frock-coat, entering up the seat-reservations for the English train, did not show that combination of obsequiousness and officiousness which a like functionary on the Continent would doubtless have assumed, but was self-respecting, kindly, and yet inexorable, in his efforts to satisfy our wishes without going beyond his rights, and accepted a half-crown tip with the startled dignity of an admiral and the pleased gratitude of a poor man, and with an air which made it clear that the service in question had been rendered before any question of the half-crown had arisen, and consequently that it would have been rendered even if you had not been a gentleman and had forgotten the tip.

Thanks to him, Andrée and I were able to find ourselves in opposite seats in the train from Dover to London, with tea laid before us in blue-and-white china on which Chinese dragons were battling with Dutch windmills. And whilst we were enjoying all those details in the carriage, the clothing of the attendants, and the manner of serving tea, which struck us as different from France (for in travelling we find something acceptable in anything out of the ordinary, because, in our fundamental awareness of the vanity of these



transplantations and the trifling sum of real pleasure which they bring us, we act like those shady men of business who inflate a balance-sheet by crediting worn stock and worthless plant at full value, and we place to the credit side of our journey the most minute variations of manners, be they quite insignificant in themselves—the actual debit side being so burdened with the weight of our headaches, our fatigue, our ravaged stomachs, our uprooted intestines, and with the sense of having lost a whole day, that every single item must be entered to make a balance), the train was sweeping us through stations to which we felt grateful for their being English, and for having the outward appearance thereof, for being called ‘Folkestone Junction’ and not ‘Embranchement de Louviers’, and for proclaiming ‘Mazawattee Tea’ rather than ‘Quinquina Dubonnet’. We were passing through small towns made up of strings of identical glazed-brick cottages, each protruding its two bow-windows which bulged into infinite distance like the lines of beautiful, athletic, and full-breasted maidens on the friezes of the Panathenæa. It was pleasing to observe that the sheep in the fields did not look like the Norman sheep, but were smaller and woollier than ours, their legs being hardly visible, which made them look like the ill-carved toys of a Swiss wood-worker, and that the trees, though of the same stuff and substance as the trees of Tansonville or Méséglise, were nevertheless planted in an English style, not in the straight lines that we know, but isolated in the midst of wide grassy fields, and were also lower and more bushy (this coming no doubt, as Andrée pointed out to me, from the nature of the soil, which does not allow the roots to plunge deep and forces the tree to expand in girth rather than height), which makes an oak, even when standing alone, look like a landscape of Gainsborough or Constable, whereas it could not possibly be an oak of Corot or Daubigny, and further,

that the grass appeared to be of a closer texture than French grass, which in point of fact is quite true, as I found later when I lay on English lawns and discovered how closely this green tissue is fitted to the ground, veiling the tiniest patch of its original soil with its clipped, curving blades, rather as the vigorous, close-trimmed hair of a young soldier spreads its dark, air-tight coating over the pinkness of his scalp.

Andrée, who was an even greater enthusiast in this game of differences than myself, pointed out to me the beauty of English graveyards, sullied by no fearful erections of iron and glass, but ranging their lines of flowery graves on a carpet of mossy grass only broken, here and there, by the decorative triangular shape of an arbor vitæ or a cypress, or by the drooping tresses of a weeping-willow, a beauty which is one of the countless and touching products of that English craving to veil the seamier side of life, which is a key to the melancholy humour of Dickens and Charles Lamb, to the cheerfulness of English soldiers during the War, to the graciousness of their hospitals, and which results in there being no more instant evocation of the happiness of being alive than a nursery of lovely fair-haired children, reared on porridge and rhymes, in some great house in Belgrave Square, or than the flowery, smiling serenity of the cemetery at Folkestone.

At last it grew dark. On the outskirts of the small towns through which the train was passing, the white tennis-players grew pale like those phantasms of which Madame de Sévigné speaks in the 'moonlight' letter, and beside me my English travelling companions, with dignified and disdainful deliberation, were beginning to bestir themselves. Hats coming down from racks, venerable and initialled leather suit-cases emerging from the depths of the carriage, and the bustling of the admiral of the Pullman—all told me that we were entering London. When I stepped out of the train, I

saw that alongside us, on the other side of the platform, a long rank of taxis was waiting, and the fact of these vehicles, attributes of the city, being actually *inside* a station, left me as much surprised as I might have been by the entry of a motor-omnibus into a cathedral. The mixture of two elements took me aback; I felt that the French method of penning up railway-trains in the stations behind closed barriers allowed these monsters to preserve a glamour essential to our enjoyment, and retained in travel that element of mystery and the nether world which is doubtless its sole charm, and then, linking this trait with others in the British character, I discovered a fascinating symmetry in the intellectual edifice which I was raising, for railway-trains, amongst this maritime race, came in like ships alongside a quay, and it was quite natural that access to *terra firma* should be unrestrained; those bare-headed young men in dinner-jackets, accompanied by those girls with their fair-skinned pallor who were drawing the mauve feathery collars of evening-cloaks closer to their throats, coming to meet the ruddy-faced old general, must surely have emerged from some neighbouring casino, and in my eyes Victoria Station came alive with the faintly swinging masts and all the kindly twinkling of a harbour. But when once our wits have found an explanation that strikes us as ingenious, we derive so keen a pleasure from it that we seek to carry it always a stage further, and as I crossed the narrow platform alongside which the coaches were moored, and was gliding still on the rails of the taxi, I reflected that this people is one loving in all things imperceptible transitions and open barriers. Just as the tides of the railroads pour freely into the heart of the city through those great docks that are called Victoria, Charing Cross, or Paddington, so the English aristocracy likes to plunge sometimes into the commonalty, not only mingling with the latter in its games, but also returning to it through

its sons (for a great-grandson of the King himself might be plain 'Mr. Windsor'), and welcoming the better plebeians without any water-tight barrier surveyed by a functionary in a peaked cap, or so, again, in English history, the monarchy assumed the form of democracy not by a bloody revolution, but without its being possible to point to any single year as that of the change, with the result that Lord So-and-So, an all-powerful nobleman, holding rights of territorial jurisdiction, having the gift of seats in the Commons in his hand, and being proprietor of four towns, is at the present day bereft of all real power, may see his own son a defeated candidate for those same seats, and yet is not left humiliated or with any feeling that a change has taken place, so, seated beside Andrée in a taxi of old-fashioned build, I found myself wafted all unawares from the peaceful shelter of the Pullman into the lurid turmoil of Buckingham Palace Road.

On arrival at the hotel, I enquired for the room I had engaged, and the porter, a small mischievous-faced fellow who looked like that old man with his nose blossoming in a huge pimple who is teaching a child his letters in one of the rooms of the Louvre, answered me with a particularly agreeable smile, but in French, which at once pleased and vexed me, for although knowing that I spoke English with a foreign accent, I was incapable of detecting that accent. Listening to Andrée, I was instantly struck by the odd turn of her English phrases, by the over-stressing and over-sibilance of her 'the's', but I myself, speaking worse than she, kept thinking with every new phrase I uttered that I would suddenly, by some phonetic miracle, catch the exact sound, for we match the sounds we produce, not at all with the real sounds which an Englishman would give to the words (and which we can no longer remember), but with a sound preserved by our memory, one that is already inexact,

for if it were exact, we should know English like an Englishman, which is not the case.

Next morning, after a deft and silent chamber-maid had pulled up the black paper blinds which had cut me off from the light, and brought me that sleepy morning cup of tea with which the English wash the night's burden of digestion from their tongues and cleanse their brains of the last lingering images of dream, I lost no time in calling Andrée and hurrying to the window. How delightful! From our rooms on the sixth floor we overlooked Hyde Park. As far as I could see stretched the green billows of trees, their greenery becoming more and more blue as they receded into the distance. Of London itself one saw only the misty outlines of houses on the farther bank of the Park, like those vague white towns in pictures by Turner (whom I then knew only through Ruskin, but to whom I was soon to be indebted for enjoyment as keen as those to which Swann had quickened me before Vermeer or Mantegna), which shelter the loves of Dido or Armida. When we came out into the street after breakfast we tried for a long time to find just what it was that gave this dreamlike aspect to a city which we had imagined to be entirely mercantile and maritime. Was it those red motor-buses revolving in long files round the Marble Arch, seemingly in ant-like obedience to some obscure law which bade them for ever follow as close as possible on each other's heels, or was it those dark policemen who seemed at one moment like Fates, their diligent fingers spinning the thread of British destinies on some invisible distaff, and at another like Spanish dancers, the outstretched left arm holding a transparent, impalpable guitar and the right twanging its single string whilst the traffic speeded before them? But no, it was neither the omnibuses nor the policemen; on the contrary, these all shared an equal appearance of solidity, metallic or carnal. Faced by this

impression, I felt now, as formerly I had felt before the three trees at Tansonville, the duty of explaining it. And at last, as I came up Whitehall, I was struck by the fact that I was walking, not through a town, but through the drawing of a town, or more precisely a wash-drawing, or perhaps one of those frenzied romantic drawings in which Victor Hugo loved to heap up black and white cathedrals, in a sort of mediæval Babel, high above walls and battlements. And this idea of a pen-and-ink drawing suddenly threw light into a whole dark tract of my consciousness. As London is a city whose air is laden with dust and fog and coal-smoke, each one of the grey houses along the street we followed was streaked with strange shadows, with gleaming white shapes which, being quite unrelated to those of the building, distorted the latter and deprived it of the aspect of a construction planned by human hands, so that these blacks and whites seemed to have been placed there by those unwitting artists of genius, chance and smoke, who had given the city this air of fantastic yet moving unreality which is only possessed by the comedies of Musset, certain dialogues of Shakespeare, and the hall of the Gare Saint-Lazare.

Towards noon I went downstairs to the apartments which the French delegation occupied in the same hotel, and had my name sent in to M. de Norpois. He received me almost immediately. 'I am all the more pleased to see you,' he said, 'because circumstances enable me to do you a service (I say "circumstances" and not "my intention", for I discovered, long before being summoned to represent France in the country where the phrase has been made proverbial, that honesty is the best policy). For I must tell you that last night I happened (a curious coincidence, on the eve of your arrival) to be dining at Lord Shalford's, and there made the acquaintance of his brother, the Desmond Farnham of whom you spoke to me and whom you are anxious to meet. I told

him of your admiration for his works, and if you wish it, I can easily give you a line of introduction to him. As a matter of fact,' went on M. de Norpois, 'I cannot say that I care much for his novels; I have made an attempt to read them, as well as those of the other English writers you mentioned during that pleasant dinner, but I shall remain faithful, if you don't mind, to my old friends of the Victorian age, whose humour, and whose narrow, but praiseworthy, conception of life conformed in my opinion much more closely to the authentic British temperament than these new works which have been subjected to the dangerous morality (or, as I ought to say, immorality) of the Russian novelists. Since being here, I have discovered the existence of a young England which would cause me much alarm on our friends' behalf, did I not feel it to be numerically weak, and powerless against the compact and vigorous bulk of traditional England. But this does not alter the fact that your friend Farnham, or, as everybody calls him here, "Desmond", is a delightful and courteous person.'

M. de Norpois wrote a few words on a card and rose, to let me understand that he had more weighty functions to fulfil than his reception of myself; an English manservant, who looked like that admiral with a purplish complexion portrayed by Reynolds in the National Gallery, showed me out with a slightly more pronounced degree of politeness, as appropriate to someone whom the head of the delegation had received without causing him to wait. I rejoined Andrée, and found her with a lady's maid whom she had engaged by telephone during the morning, a dark little person dressed entirely in black, about forty years old, who reminded one of an engraving intended to represent in human form the ant of the fable in some illustrated volume of the Romantic period, and who doggedly answered Andrée's enquiries as to her name with the words: 'Tuttle, ma'am.'

'Tuttle?' said Andrée.

'Yes, ma'am—Tuttle,' repeated the maid.

'Tuttle?' said Andrée.

'Tuttle,' said the maid.

'I am glad to see you back again,' Andrée said to me. 'You know, I thought my English was fairly correct—at least my governesses kept telling me so, and you remember how when I was translating George Eliot with you I was only very seldom obliged to look up a word in the dictionary, but this woman doesn't seem to understand what I say, and answers me with a word I simply don't know.'

I then explained to Andrée that in England a master and mistress invariably address a lady's maid (and likewise a butler) by her surname, a usage which strikes me as more reasonable than the French one, the relation of master to servant being of a social order, like that of captain to soldier, or judge to prisoner, and in no way of a sentimental order, as that of husband to wife or lover to mistress. And so Andrée's English maid was perfectly right in answering 'Tuttle' to my friend's questioning, Tuttle being her surname.

I must say a word about this Tuttle, who was with us throughout our visit to England. During the first half-hour of life in common, Andrée and I thought her stupid, because she answered any orders given with 'Yes, ma'am', replying with such extraordinary rapidity, even, as it seemed, before she could have had time to transpose the sounds of our voices into thought, but we were not long in discovering that we were mistaken, and were convinced within a few days that Tuttle was a person of admirable intelligence, gifted with a sense of organization bordering on the marvellous; for if Andrée had said to her at six in the morning, 'We are leaving at noon for Constantinople, Bagdad and Calcutta. Pack the bags, take tickets, and see to the passports'—Tuttle would



have answered, 'Yes, ma'am', Andrée and I could have gone to sit in the lounge and read *Punch* (the subtlety and intelligence of whose comedy, for all its simplicity, delighted us both), and about half-past eleven we should have seen Tuttle appear, and Andrée would quite casually have asked her, 'Is everything ready, Tuttle?' and she would have answered, 'Yes, Ma'am', which would be quite true, and if I had added, 'Will you please order a taxi, Tuttle', she would have given me a slightly surprised and much offended look and said, turning not towards myself but to Andrée, 'The taxi is at the door, ma'am', thus making it perfectly clear not only that one general order sufficed and that detailed arrangements ought to be left to her own initiative (like a good chief-of-staff, pained if the new general wants to meddle with transport lines, and giving him respectfully to understand that he knows his job), but also that she was in Andrée's service, that she was a lady's maid, and that if the gentleman saw fit to travel without a valet, he did not thereby acquire any right to turn a lady's maid into a courier. On these two points, during the whole time of her being with us, Tuttle remained as obdurate as the Duc de Saint-Simon on the question of his wife's stool, or as the Duchesse de Guermantes in her resolve not to receive Madame de Cambremer. She did not refuse to perform services for me, and was admirable in the art of running the iron down a pair of trousers or in folding waistcoats in a suitcase, but she declined to take the order to carry out these functions, although in themselves they were a pleasure to her, from myself. If I did ask her for such favours, she went to see Andrée in the adjoining room, consulted her, and then, having received confirmation of an order which, as it was signed by a personage without due authority, she had been unable to take at its face value, she made ready to execute it.

I sent M. de Neipcis's card to Desmond Farinham, adding quite a long letter to it, and whilst awaiting a reply, Andrée and I began our visits to the museums of London. At the Tate Gallery we spent long hours in front of the Turners. Spiralling in long wheels, the trails of white, golden and vaporous cloud floated across skies far different from those, with their round cloud-shapes, of Constable or Gainsborough. Strange cities, where Grecian temples mingled anachronistically with feudal keeps, seemed to soar upward into a pale mist from green unfathomed ocean-beds. Placed within the field of this wavy and distorting vision, every landscape suffered an engulfing sea-change, every city became an Atlantis peopled with swirling phantoms. Following the life of the painter along the walls by means of the dates of his pictures, I could trace his growing obsession with images of the sea and the idea of dissolution. As a young man he observed sunken boats and shipwrecked vessels, and loved to fondle the deep green white-flecked hollows of towering waves. Then the whole universe became for him one billowy ocean. The saffron and pale-rose hollows of the valley of Orvieto softly unfurled themselves, the walls and trees took on that strange rich air of the deep-sea forests of Shakespeare, and his palace of Calypso seemed to be awaiting the bleached bones of the drowned mariners of 'The Tempest'. Standing with Andrée near the entrance of that long room, I pointed out to her that, viewed from a distance, each picture seemed like a breaking wave of colour; on the crest of which floated an ocean pine, one fragment of uprooted flotsam, toppling upon floods of red coral and amber. We went over to 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage'; the trees of the Italian landscape drooped on to the rocks like seaweed; a sandy beige, gripped in Rembrandt-*esque* fashion by a yellowish light, formed a neutral background for the enamel tints, and then, in Turner's old age,

the sea itself was dissolved, and the 'Morning after the Deluge' became, in the eye of a floating God, no more than a whirlpool of light drawing down to itself the pale bodies of sirens.

I tried to show Andrée that landscape painters could be grouped under two heads, which, in a quite personal and in no way pedantic classification, I called the 'glossy' and the 'distorters', the former being the men of objective habit, whose main care is for accuracy, who concentrate on rendering the wonderful simplicity of all natural transitions, and are in painting what the Tolstoy of 'War and Peace' is in literature; the 'distorters', on the other hand, being the subjective minds, more concerned with a manner of seeing than with the thing seen, and, like a Renoir or a Monticelli, transmuting the visible world as a Giraudoux or a Virginia Woolf does the world of sentiment.

'Look at the Corots of the Roman Campagna,' I said to Andrée, 'those in the Moreau Collection at the Louvre, or, if you like, at that little view of Avignon here in London, or amongst the English school, at that man I am so fond of, Richard Parkes Bonington. These are pure "glossy" painters. Now come and see these Gainsborough landscapes, with trees like ostrich plumes; there you can just catch a beginning of the "distorting" genius.'

'Of which Turner would be the climax,' said Andrée.

'You are most intelligent, Andrée dear. Yes, Turner, and also of course some of our own Impressionists. Rembrandt bequeathed them his light, as I showed you in Turner, and as I could also show you in certain Constables. But Constable is particularly interesting because he was skilled in both schools of painting. You remember the other day how we admired that small landscape in which he depicted so well the "painted wood" aspect, the "quilted sofa" aspect, of certain grassy downs in the limestone districts of England

—just like the Italian Corots. Now, on the other hand look at this firmy red it has all the strange gleam, all the "sheet silver", of Turner. And that twofold aptitude makes me prefer Constable to Turner, just as I prefer Boudin to Monet. We must go and see the Boudins at the Tate, they are excellent, and they'll show you that Boudin, like Constable, does not harp on one string. He is "glossy" in the manner of his painting in the exactness of the vivid colours, so few and so well detached on the sandy uniformity of the backgrounds but in his drawing with its sparse, black, enchanting lines, he is a "distorter".

Passing without stopping (for Andrée did not like them, but I knew I should have found some pleasure, perhaps artificial, in them) through the Pre-Raphaelite rooms ('And yet, Andrée,' I said, 'you declare that Millais is very bad, and I certainly grant you that almost always he is bad, but look at that tiny picture in which a woman in a pale yellow gown is seated under a blue umbrella beside some tiny red flowers which look like Luca Signorelli's—how good that is! Now come, you are often unjust in your judgments, and even you and I, who believe we are open minded, will be victims of a fashionable opinion'), we went over to the portrait-printers, amongst whom I was especially glad to find Reynolds again, and his Robinetta, so triangular, voluptuous cruel, and frank.

Three days after my arrival, the hotel porter (who, although I was a guest of no importance, was very friendly towards me, because he spoke French with a very pure accent, so that I gave him an opportunity of displaying a talent, and this is a much more potent cause of good feeling than a tip) handed me a letter, the typewritten address of which presented the most astonishing appearance, its lines heaving up and down like a stormy sea some characters being blue and others red, quite meaninglessly, and yet this

untidiness and incoherence, far from offending the eye, succeeded, on the contrary, by an astonishing victory of man over keyboard, in giving that cold mechanical writing the air of intimate and privy courtesy in a handwritten address. When I opened the letter, I was stirred when I found it signed 'Desmond Farnham', and read that he was inviting me to lunch that same day, at half-past one o'clock.

I did not note, when I was recounting my conversation with M. de Norpois, how greatly surprised I had been to learn that my favourite novelist was the brother of Lord Shalford. Certainly I had never cherished that prejudice, foolish enough, but widely spread amongst intelligent men, which consists in regarding talent or genius as reservations of the commoner classes, and refusing to recognize them if they appear in a man of high birth, or even in one who merely mixes in the best society (which, in the seventeenth century, would have meant denying genius to the author of the 'Maximes', and in the eighteenth to Saint-Simon), but Farnham's name, and the nature of his novels, had always led me to imagine a gentle, shrinking, solitary man, traits of character which I could not readily associate with the name of the Shalfords, famed and gallant Cavaliers in Stuart days, who for three centuries have been giving England a numerous band of ministers, generals, admirals and viceroys. Andrée, who made 'Debrett' her favourite companion in the hotel reading-room, informed me that after the name of Lord Shalford, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., 9th Viscount and 15th Baron, there occurred this entry: 'Brother living: Honble. Desmond Farnham . . . educated at Winchester . . . secretary of Embassy . . . Colonel . . . War, 1914-1918 . . . D.S.O.' So not only was the frail and delicate author of 'Tiziano Sorelli' the son of a lord temporal, but he was also a diplomat and a colonel; and yet (although Debrett, with strange shamefacedness, did not

add that he was one of the great writers of our time) there could be no doubt about his identity, a revelation which forced me to a total refashioning of the image I had formed of him, just as I had to do, even more curiously, a few days later in the House of Commons, where I had asked to be taken, when a Labour member rose to question Sir Austen Chamberlain on certain points of foreign policy, and I pleasantly pictured to myself this man of the people patiently training himself in the moments he snatched from his manual toil, and poring over the map of Europe and its history when he came up from the mine or out of the workshop. I asked my guide the name of this socialist, and he told me without further comment that it was Arthur Ponsonby, which I accepted as quite satisfactory. Well, it happened a few days later that M. de Norpois was speaking of King Edward VII in my presence, and saying, 'It was not easy for him to forgive Arthur Ponsonby his opposition, for after all, as he said, Ponsonby was born in the purple.' I asked what this phrase might mean, and M. de Norpois, looking at me with some surprise, replied 'What could it mean, except that Arthur Ponsonby was born in Windsor Castle?'—which gave me yet one more proof that we do not perceive reality, but perceive what we believe to be reality, for I had in all good faith been admiring the hereditary features of a great aristocrat as the toil-worn face of a worker. And when I became more familiar with them, I took great pleasure in those complicated names of English families, and just as Françoise at home loved repeating to herself that the son of the Duc de Guermantes was the Prince de Laumes, and the sons of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld were the Duc de Liancourt and the Prince de Marsillac, so I was delighted to discover that the charming Eric Phipps, who was at the British Embassy in Paris, was descended from the Marquesses of Normanby, that the eldest

son of the Marquis of Headfort is that Earl of Bective whose pleasure it is to do electrician's jobs (so that in many London houses the maid will come in and announce, 'Lord Bective, ma'am, has come about the bells'), his second son being called Lord William Taylour, and even such blended historical and topographical information as that the Duke of Westminster's family name is Grosvenor, and the Duke of Bedford's, Russell.

It had been my hope to lunch alone with Desmond Farnham, but when the butler who opened the door of the small Chelsea house to me, with tortoiseshell spectacles planted on his very youthful features, and having at once the air of a student of an eminent family and that of an overgrown child (an aspect which all British butlers have in my eyes, on account of their striped trousers, which, in conjunction with their silk-lined coats, brings back to my mind that costume known as 'Eton', so much so that even to-day, after encountering him a score of times, I cannot set eyes on the venerable and almost centenarian butler of the Duchess of Surrey without thinking of a senior schoolboy), took my overcoat, I saw that other coats were already lying on the seat where he placed mine, and I gathered from his haste that I was the last arrival. For I had not yet learned that in punctuality the English are the second people in the world, the first being the Swedes, who, if they are invited for seven o'clock, arrive in a body two seconds before seven and only press the button of the door-bell at the precise moment when the hour strikes so as to enter then in a steady stream while the seven strokes are sounding, like those figures in the Strasbourg cathedral clock who emerge at noon from their gilded abode, while the English, with more indulgence, grant, if absolutely necessary, a respite of two minutes (but yet some of them do not grant that, for Lady Oxford said to me one day: 'I don't wait for anybody, except the King').

I had barely time to observe as I entered the drawing-room that the decoration was French, and Second Empire, for Farnham came up to me at once with a very kindly smile, whilst I murmured a few words, to which, however, he did not listen, for he was engaged in presenting me to Lady Shalford, his sister-in-law, to Lady Patricia Crawley, to Lord Shalford, his brother, who was like Sargent's portrait of Lord Ribblesdale, and to Osbert Sitwell, who looked like Sacha Guitry in his youth, a brief formality after which the conversation was resumed as if I did not exist, a conversation which it was difficult for me to follow, primarily because it was in English and extremely fast, but more especially because its theme was the life of certain mysterious beings whom I did not know, and who in any case, being mentioned only by their Christian names and even, frequently, by their nicknames, were impossible for a foreigner to identify. Lady Patricia, who had just returned from Italy, brought news from Florence:

'Aldous and his wife are flourishing; Aldous is working on a long novel. Sybil is with the Berensons. Diana is at the Lido, Tiny at Danteli's. Your father was away, Osbert. Gladys is at Siena with Mr. Wilkins, who's getting more and more like Queen Victoria; I went to their place and Mr. Wilkins met me at the station himself in his Packard.'

It was plain that the very names of Mr. Wilkins and Gladys contained an inherent comicality, invisible, as it seemed, to me, but no doubt luminous to the initiate, for whenever they appeared in any sentence, everybody laughed except myself, who literally did not know what to say. I had rehearsed a few amiable remarks, quite genuine though certainly awkward, on Farnham's books and the influence they had had on my life, but I now felt that it would be not only ludicrous, but shocking and inept, to utter them, and



so I could only try to ask in a whisper who Gladys might be, at which he laughed without replying, and asked Lady Patricia to explain Gladys to me.

'It's a long saga,' said Lady Patricia (and I set myself the problem of deciding whether the word had been restored to fashion by Galsworthy and his Forsytes, or whether, the other way round, Galsworthy had used it because it had remained current). 'How is one to begin, Desmond? Ten years ago Gladys was Gladys Weston. In those days she was a young American who, shortly before the War, took London by storm in a single night because she turned up at quite a serious party dressed in a man's jacket and with white satin trousers. Her husband was Douglas Weston, who had a good voice.'

'And for whom, you remember,' interrupted Lady Shalford, 'she extracted some lessons from old Van Dyck, who no longer gave any to anybody, by just going and sitting on his doorstep until he agreed to receive her.'

'Do you remember the little studio, Desmond?' said Lady Patricia to Farnham. 'Gladys and her husband' (she went on, addressing myself) 'had rented a small studio down here in Chelsea where the greatest musicians in the world used to come. You heard Cortot, Pablo Casals, Arthur Rubenstein, Chaliapin. About four in the morning the music stopped, and everyone went to bed, just anyhow, on the divans covered with cushions which went right round the studio. Most of the musicians were going back by the morning boat-train, and they used to leave there straight for the station. Sometimes one would go with them. It was charming. And then the War came, and the studio was closed, and that was the end of Gladys Weston in London.'

At that moment we went in to lunch, and while the young Etonian with his tortoiseshell glasses passed round the caviare with such a perfect air of it being a matter of

course that I really took him for a butler, Lady Patricia went on

'In New York, apparently, the Westons went on having an amusing time Gladys went quite mad, but really charmingly so She used to steal the firemen's axes in Broadway theatres, and leave them in taxi-cabs, and then she would put an advertisement in the *New York Times* saying 'Left in a taxi, fireman's axe stolen from Theatre Guild Please return to Mrs Gladys Weston Reward' A fortnight afterwards she had a letter from the taximan 'Madam—I beg pardon for not having returned the axe sooner, but I have had cramp in the stomach If you still need it, it is at your disposal'

And so the saga of Gladys Weston was unfolded throughout luncheon, Lady Patricia alternating with Lady Shalford like the two parts of a Greek chorus I was told how Weston was dead, and how Gladys had married a very rich banker, who was mentioned only by his Christian name, Edward, and how, when travelling with Edward in New Mexico she had caught sight, through the door of the railway carriage, of an Indian who looked just like Queen Victoria, and had said to Edward, 'I'm sorry, darling but I love that Indian and I'll have to leave you' (A phrase which enabled me to suppose, though it was not said that the Indian was Mr. Wilkins) These stories were told in a very agreeable vein of humour, and I should have found them most amusing had I not arrived at Farnham's with the absurd but persistent idea that it was my duty there to make exposition of my soul, and likewise to garner exact and fresh ideas regarding the younger English writers, with the result that I was gradually overcome by despair when I saw that an hour which I had so much looked forward to was being frittered away in chatter which, though possibly charming was certainly pointless For a moment the presence of Lord

Shalford, who was a member of the Cabinet, led me to hope that my taste for the serious might be satisfied, and that we should at least have some talk of English politics, but he gave a long description of the state of health of two of his friends, Stanley and Austen, so that I ceased listening until, surprised at the interest Farnham showed in these medical remarks, I asked him who these two gentlemen were, and received the reply 'Stanley Baldwin and Austen Chamberlain, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary'.

But now, as I was on the very point of yielding to my despair, it turned out to be just this conversation on Sir Austen Chamberlain's illness that saved me, for Lady Shalford said:

'At last, I'm glad to say, they've managed to convince him that he must take some rest, and he's going to take a sea-voyage. I went to Hatchard's this morning to find some books for him.'

'I hope, Alice,' said Farnham, 'that you remembered my Americans?'

'Of course,' she said. 'I sent him the "Bridge", the Willa Cather, and "The Great American Band Wagon".'

In this way books were introduced, and for a quarter of an hour they remained on the stage, which at last enabled me, as I so eagerly wished, to hear Desmond Farnham talking of literary matters. In point of fact, he and his friends talked of them in a way quite different from that in which a French gathering of the same intellectual standing would have done. Here again, authors were referred to only by their Christian names, so that it took me some time to realize that Arnold was Arnold Bennett; Virginia, Virginia Woolf; Harold, Harold Nicolson; and Maurice, Maurice Baring; moreover, pedantry was so scrupulously avoided that one sometimes had the impression of an affectation of nonchalance and frivolity in passing judgment. Lord Shal-

ford, in particular, a most cultivated man, tried to make one believe that he read nothing but detective stories and only went to see 'mystery' plays, and when his brother recommended Gerhardt's 'Tutality' to him—'It will amuse you, Howard: you know such a lot about Russia'—he asked with feigned apprehensiveness, 'But isn't it rather Virginia Woolfish?' Whereupon his wife said to him, 'Really, you're intolerable, Howard. . . . You pretend you don't understand "Mrs. Dalloway" and you simply can't put the book down.'

'Not at all, Alice! The truth is that I *try* to understand because I'm jealous of your high-brow friends. . . . It's perfectly true, Patricia, Alice is terribly high-brow, you know. . . . She is quite ashamed of me in front of you, Sitwell, or in front of M. Jean Cocteau when he comes to see us at Antibes.'

'Oh, Howard. . . . How *can* you say I'm high-brow? Why, I'm simply terrified when I do happen to find myself amongst a Bloomsbury set!'

During my stay in England I was very often to hear the two expressions which had just taken me by surprise (I mean 'high-brow' and 'Bloomsbury'), and although their meanings were outwardly very different, the former indicating a physiognomical trait and the latter a district in London, yet in point of fact they were both applied to one particular group whose æsthetic and literary judgments were regarded as important, consummate, not to say extreme, by the very people who spoke of them ironically, for, like those saints whose virtues touched the hidden hearts of the agnostic patricians who sent them to the torture, the aloof and subtle critics of Bloomsbury perturbed these English spirits who were the most hostile to their tastes, leading them to voice their glorying incomprehension with a vigour the very excess of which was an immediate

pointer to its weakness. The timidity of the all-powerful Lord Shalford, a Secretary of State, in the face of this group was not feigned, for a few weeks later I saw him reduced to speechless uneasiness when confronted by an old lady living in a thatched cottage near Cambridge, who had written a book on John Donne which had been praised by Bloomsbury, so that really it is a great mistake to say, as people will, that the intellectuals in England have not the same status as they have in France. True, they have not, and would not wish for, the same position in society, but by the very fact of this detachment they maintain the unimpaired lustre and the consecrated character which are the only fitting attributes of intellectuals.

Greatly pleased by Lord Shalford's ingenuousness, whether feigned or actual, I manœuvred myself into closer proximity to him, and asked him whether, as he was the Air Minister, he had had occasion to meet M. de Norpois in the course of the recent negotiations.

'Yes,' he replied. 'And I feel a certain admiration for M. de Norpois as one who, unlike so many European statesmen, is no slave to formulas. It is to America, and in a more general way, to the popular Press, that we owe the dangerous habit of the "slogan", the telling phrase, on which a minister imagines he can construct both a programme and a platform, and of which he merely becomes the servant. Your friend Norpois certainly has a taste for formulas, but he likes them multiple and contradictory, and this leaves them for the most part innocuous. If he is not altogether my diplomatic ideal, that is only because he is too perfect a diplomat, a quality which inspires a certain distrust in one who has to deal with him. I have always felt that the best negotiators are men like Mr. Balfour, who will pursue a conversation with unwavering precision, but will always keep an air of being lost in some erudite reverie or

of making a mental translation of a Greek poet, or else, in a different but equally effective style, men like Lord Derby, whose joviality and, as you call it in France, "*l'air ben enfant*", preclude any lurking Machiavellism.'

Now, obviously, nothing could have been more likely to interest me than these observations of Lord Shalford's, and I should have enjoyed them keenly had I not received the impression whilst we were talking, that he was inexorably eyeing the light-coloured uppers of my boots, uppers for which I was not really responsible, as my bootmaker had persuaded me before I left that these kid uppers were fashionable in England, and I now noticed, not only that I was alone in advertising my lower extremities with this startling conspicuousness, but even that everybody else's were extremely old, and Lord Shalford's indeed almost in holes. Now this indifference to elegance, this loyalty to things old, struck me as admirable virtues, contrasted with which the insolent newness of my almost white uppers struck me as ostentatious and damnable. I was conscious that nothing accorded less with my character than a desire to attract attention by such means, that, on the contrary, I had ordered these hateful boots through a craving for conformity and simply because of my bootmaker's remarks, but of this Farnham and his friends knew nothing, and, thinking that they would doubtless judge me by this detail and by a few awkward words which had not (my English being only middling) exactly conveyed my thoughts, I felt desperate. But just when I was painfully and clumsily taking leave, convinced that I must have left a very bad impression on these Englishmen and that they would not invite me again, Farnham suddenly asked me, with a great deal of kindly concern, what I proposed to do in England. I told him it was my intention to remain for a few weeks so as to see the English country-side.

'A good idea,' said Lord Shalford. 'You ought to come and stay somewhere near me, in Surrey. . . . Look, there is a beautiful house that has just been turned into an hotel by an old friend of mine, Major Low. . . . You know Ashby Hall, Desmond?'

'A capital idea,' said Farnham. 'That's it—he must go to Ashby Hall, and as we're all going to Bosworth, my brother's place, next week, we can be neighbours'—turning towards myself with these last words.

And with the sudden discovery of this extreme kindness, this determination to be pleasant to me, amongst people whom I thought I had shocked, not to say disgusted, I felt such a surge of inward happiness that I now saw them as the most interesting and charming group of people I had ever before known, and when I returned to the hotel I sang their praises to Andrée with fondness and vehemence.

'You know,' I said to her, 'I think they're right. We ought to go and stay near them. I should greatly like to see one of these great English houses, and it will be very pleasant to have the Shalfords as neighbours. I shall try to get an invitation for you too, and in any case we shall be able to take lots of walks together, for Ashby Hall is in splendid country. What we must do is to hire a car for the time of our stay, and we can send Tuttle by rail with the trunks. . . .'

Andrée called Tuttle, who was of course in the next room, for she never moved far away and when not working for Andrée remained reading 'Home Chat'. Tuttle gave us a look of authority, self-effacement, and dignity, and awaited Andrée's orders.

'Tuttle,' I said (and for an instant she turned a surprised head in my direction, then fixed it again towards Andrée, judging, I suppose, that although she could not, alas, suppress me, still the sounds emanating from me would

then, by refraction from Andrée, reach her from a proper direction) 'Tuttle, we are going to stay at Ashby Hall. It is a country hotel lying between Guildford and Dorking. I don't know which station is the nearer. . . . You are to go there with the luggage. We shall go by car, but we shall have to find a chauffeur. I know that this is all rather complicated. . . . If you fetch me a time-table, I shall tell you the time of your train. As for the car . . .'

Here Tuttle stopped me, gently and firmly.

'If you will just tell me, ma'am', she said in a tone of polite reproach, 'what time you wish the car to be at the hotel, and what time I ought to meet you with the luggage at Ashby Hall . . . ?'

And sure enough, at the appointed time, in front of the door of the Hyde Park Hotel, we found a car driven by a French chauffeur whom Tuttle had somehow or other discovered in London within an hour or two, and when we arrived at Guildford that evening, we likewise found Tuttle, there in Andrée's room, having already unpacked our trunks, and seemingly having spent all her life in this house, and yet being ready to leave it without any regrets at five minutes' notice.

The hotel Lord Shalford had told us about was an old red-brick manor-house, which Farnham had told me was beautiful and not unlike Ham House, where Lord Dysart lived, but for the first few days I could not succeed in grasping this beauty, which, for all I could see, was no more than that of any other brick house, for our æsthetic pleasures are built up of unconscious comparisons with examples we have already encountered and recorded, and just as during the first days of a sojourn amongst Negroes or Eskimos, all the women seem to our eyes ugly until the moment when a certain picture of the norm of the Negress or the female *Eskimo enriches us with that seemingly eternal idea, in the*



light of which alone we are able to view objects, so for several days Andrée and I were always surprised to read in the guide-book, 'Note at *Dunsfold* the Clock Hotel, one of the finest Georgian houses in England', and then to see a quite ordinary house, its porch, with a triangular pediment, resting on twin white pillars, while its red façade was relieved at the top by a narrow band of stone with only a trace of carving. Well, a week later we were both in love with this supremely simple architecture, delighting to draw each other's attention to the exactness of the proportions, to the perfect grace of this or that sash-window, to the fan-light surmounting a doorway, or to the colour of a brick here and there, its half-vitrified red recalling the glowing warmth of some Egyptian jewel.

Round Ashby Hall spread a broad, mown lawn, its tightly-stretched carpet seeming to be nailed down right against the walls of the house, and ornamented by four immemorial yews clipped in the form of gigantic bowls, the insides of which seemed as if they might have formed as it were a darkened rest-room, had not the eye distinguished the monstrous network of their thick twisting stems, the foul framework on which that luxurious, almost insubstantial, shell of bosky green was stretched. Beyond a white rail lay wide meadows with a stream flowing through them, and these, being as free and untamed as the lawn was trim and clipped, made a pleasing contrast with the latter. This wide stretch of land was doubtless marshy, for the grass covering it had the shaggy, wavelike, and almost aqueous appearance of water-plants, a sea of rushes and tall sword-like stems whose tide, when the wind stirred its yielding surface, beat against the strong, solid breakwater of the lawn. A few miles from Ashby Hall rose the high hills of Hindhead, covered with yellow furze and with heather, the dead colours of which I liked, the crackling rosy purple

and dull green, that aspect of being at once dead wood and flowered beds which invested these heaths (as those in Scotland) with a subtle and mysterious charm. Further on, the road ran through a small town, old and flowery, a black clock face with gilt numerals jutted out, slightly askew, over the High Street, the white inn with its black beams still bore the same name as in the days when the Portsmouth coach came cantering in beneath its archway with the post-boy cracking his whip. The little grey-stone houses, with their twin bulging windows, had kept their lattice-panes cross-hatched with lead. Andrée was surprised to notice how the old house-fronts blended decorously with those standardized shop-fronts which seem in England like the *leitmotiven* of urban life, the red pediment, flat yet noisy, of Woolworth's, the rounded, multiple and very unpharmaceutical window of Boots', and the glazed tile strip of W. H. Smith & Son's, Booksellers, but I tried to show her that the peculiar genius of England lies in her incorporation of a quite modern life within an antique setting, and that a small town like Guildford is a very close image of the mind of a young Englishman as shaped by Oxford and Cambridge, for that mind, like the charming houses of this steeply-pitched High Street, will be found to contain a timbered building of the sixteenth or seventeenth century occupied by an intellectual Boot's or Woolworth (say Freud, or Einstein, Ltd), a character which makes the English High Street very different from the American Main Street, because in the latter neither the intellectual nor commercial branch-shops have found a pre-existing and picturesque framework waiting for them to step into, and are left to provide their own background, modern, still and monotonous.

To Andrée and myself, who had both been devoted to English history and English literature, nothing was more



softness, which infused their ease of manner, their courtesy, the surface calm of their faces, a smoothness that inevitably reminded me of their springy, well-trimmed turf, I had been tempted at first to regard these Englishmen as blissful and insensitive. But little by little, as I came to know them better, as much by my personal observations as by the stories of Desmond Farnham, with whom I had reached terms of intimacy, I discovered that the tranquil tone of their voices was capable of masking the same passions and sufferings that stir other men; thus, Lord Shalford really did feel shy before his wife's high-brow friends, and Desmond, telling me of the veiled loves of a friend of his, described how this man's jealousy reached such a pitch that when a clumsy hostess, at a river-party on the Thames, did not allot him a place in the same boat as the woman he was fond of, he jumped into the water in evening-dress to rejoin this lady (which confirmed Stendhal's theory, for no Frenchman, from sheer pride, would have done such a thing), the difference between the English and my Continental friends residing in the fact that these dramas, for all their violence, left no trace on their pink cheeks or in their blue eyes, but were enacted on a different plane, far removed from the observer and yet coinciding with the perfectly tranquil presence of the hero himself, rather like those secondary pictures which a cinematographer will sometimes throw upon the screen simultaneously with the principal picture, to evoke a memory or suggest a comparison.

One evening (we had been staying at Ashby Hill for about a fortnight) I was struck on my way back there by a curious and quite powerful sensation which I recognized as that of wonted habitude. For the first time since being in England I seemed to be 'coming home', and on analysing this impression I found that it arose from my memory having gradually recorded, exactly and infallibly, the pictures which made up

the Ashby road and the park surrounding our house. I now knew, when I saw a certain white rail beside which stood a cottage of grey stone with its windows framed with lead strips, that a hundred yards further would bring me to the beginning of a long alley of lime trees, and sure enough, one minute later, the real alley of limes actually arrived and set itself with scrupulous accuracy over the one already outlined in my mind, this evoking in its turn a clump of three oaks, a dark curtain of yews, a rose-garden, and once again the three oaks, the sombre yews and the vivid roses of nature came and played themselves in the concave matrix which, graven within me by an artist of marvellous accuracy, was awaiting them. Now the sentiment of 'home' is nothing else than this coinciding of our expectancy with reality (an impression that is agreeable because in all of us, as a legacy from the long centuries of terror when the universe, a monster with unknowable reactions, made men afraid, there survives a taste for whatever is fixed and familiar), and it had needed only a fortnight for this impression to become as powerful to me in this foreign land as it might have been at Combray, or later at the Hotel at Balbec. And so, reflecting that what was true of places was true no less of persons, that now Desmond Farnham as once Bergotte, now Lord Shalford as once the Duc de Guermantes, were becoming in my eyes straightforward characters whose reactions, whose ideas, nay whose very answers, I could foresee, discovering also that, if I let myself go, Lady Patricia would soon inspire in me those sentiments which I had formerly owed (different though they were) to Gilberte, then to Albertine or the Duchesse de Guermantes, I realized yet once more that our sentiments are independent of the objects that give them birth, and that we carry with us to new places and even into new countries, certain possibilities of emotion which all, sooner or later, find in our environment their means of satis-

factio 1, a reflectio 1 which might well have led me also to question the worth of national sentiments if, after seeking in my new life the sentimental equivalents of all the elements in my past life, and after finding as I said just now, Ashby Hall for Combray, Iarnham for Berpote, and Shalford Abbey for the Guermantes mansion, I had not noted that after the experiment, at the very bottom of the resort, there remained a sort of indescribable residue, slight but irreducible, and such that not all my efforts could produce an English substance with which it had any affinity, a residue that seemed to me unsatisfied, almost plaintive, powerless to achieve a stable compound with anything in my present environment, and which, by its microscopic presence (just as some slight aberration in the orbit of a planet, constant, vexatious, and inexplicable by any mathematical error, is proof to the astronomer of the existence of some invisible heavenly body) made me continually aware of the presence, the distant, veiled, silent, and yet unmistakable presence, of France



PART II  
PRESENT AND FUTURES





## RELATIVITY

### I

#### A TOUCH OF INFINITY

'BEAUTIFUL,' she said, 'are the architectures of God.' Around us the gleaming crests of snow ringed the valley with a diamond circle. Snow covered one side of the hollow, a mantle of pines the other half. In its depths the grass was of an almost liquid green; bare, pale trees seemed to be mirrored in a verdurous lake with white banks.

'Look down at the road beneath our feet,' said I. 'Do you see those deep parallel ruts made by the cart-wheels? Just imagine that down in the hollow of that bend, in between those two curves of upturned snow, there are living certain creatures of infinite smallness, invisible to our eyes. "Let us admire," they are saying, "these snowy crests and the architectures of God. . . ."'

'And are they wrong?' she said. 'Was it not an intelligence which made this road, and fashioned the curve of the track and this twofold harmony of the bend?'

'Human intelligence,' I answered. 'It is the will of a poor being, ignorant of the aims of the Universe and seeking only the maintenance of his fleeting and frail existence. . . . Our friends in the rut are at this moment worshipping the work of the farmer's cart, not the work of a divine architect. Who knows whether the astounding order which you and I think we can discern in the world, may not be in its turn, the manifestation of the activities of some vast animal which,

on some inconceivably gigantic planet, is seeking its love and nourishment?’

‘Perhaps,’ she said. ‘But that animal, with its love and its food, still forms a part of God’s plan, just as the farmer’s cart does, and just as you yourself, with your doubts, do. . . . Do you remember the day when we went to the observatory to see the sun-spots?’

We were on the bridge of an interstellar liner. The aged silver-haired astronomer called out the longitudes to the celestial steersman. The cupola swung round towards a dart of light. Projected on to a white card, the spots looked like some leprous disease of the sun, the livid purple bruise from some blow. Solar storms, said the astronomer. Nobody knew much about it, said the astronomer. (The evening before, another scientist had shown me cups of cells under the microscope in his laboratory. In a circular world grey plains were sprinkled with lakes of darker tinge. Little was known about the morphology of cells, said the biologist. Nobody knew much about it, said the biologist.) The sun-spots looked very like the cells. Shapeless landscapes. Inhuman landscapes. Probably the surface of the Earth would look thus to a dweller upon Sirius. ‘Spots,’ the Sirian would say, ‘shapeless spots,’—and it would be Paris, and this garden, and ourselves. Under his eyes he would have our sufferings, our hopes, a day of revolution, a day of festival. Under his eyes he would have the Paris of July 14, 1789, or the Paris of November 11, 1918. ‘One degree to the left,’ he would say to the man under his cupola, ‘shapeless granular formations.’ In the cells also, and in those black chromosomes, living beings were reviving at the fires of the microscope their infinitely brief existence. ‘It has been calculated,’ they were saying, ‘that the Great Light has been flooding the Universe for one hundred billion chromosome years.’

The cupola turned, the rollers swivelled round, the telescope swung up. 'Venus,' said the astronomer as if announcing the next station. 'In the realm of the stars,' said the astronomer, 'deaths are more frequent than births. This universe has begun; this universe will end. It has begun its ending. . . . Stick a stamp on a penny' (said the astronomer) 'and put the coin on the Obelisk. If the height of the whole is taken as representing the time that has elapsed since the world came into being, the penny on that scale represents the time since mankind has walked the earth, and the thickness of the stamp the time since parts of mankind have been civilized. . . . Add one stamp for each five-thousand-year period of civilization, and carry on until your obelisk is as high as Mont Blanc. You will still be far from the probable duration of man's future. This image, which I borrow from my colleague Sir James Jeans, is more or less accurate. And it is consoling . . . But the day will come when not only man, but also the Earth, and the Universe too, will return into Nothingness. . . . Perhaps it was but a fleeting thought that crossed the mind of God.'

The helmsman announced Venus. It was a pale pink globe. . . . I thought of a postage-stamp . . . of a mountain of postage-stamps. And Homer's three thousand years of veneration. . . . Fame—half a postage-stamp, I reflected. 'I wonder who the devil created this world,' said Byron, 'and the fellows of colleges, and women of a certain age, and myself more particularly?'

'The Universe,' said the astronomer, 'is finite in space as in Time. It is curved, and after millions of years light comes back upon itself. It is almost empty. Imagine that the Grand-Palais contained nothing but three or four particles of dust, and you will have an idea of the distances separating the stars of the Milky Way from each other.

Beyond that, you would have to go thousands of miles before you found another grain of dust. . . .'

To bring us back to the metal staircase of the terrestrial landing-stage, the cupola creaked, turned, and sank. I wondered, thought I, who the devil created this world? Who the devil created this curving and almost empty world? What mind was it—a mind impossible even to imagine—that said to itself: 'I am going to throw a few specks of luminous dust into a corner of the Void. Upon one of these specks, dark, chilled, and just like thousands of others, lost in an infinitely small globule of the Infinitely Great, which in itself is but a globule of the Void, I shall bring into being some living and sentient matter. I shall allow it to imagine that the whole world, the stars in their courses and the abysses of the heavens, are only a stage upon which purely human dramas are enacted. And then, to a few, I shall grant the power to measure the vastness of the abysses, the vanity of their own existence, and the obscurity of my designs . . .'  
—what mind said these things?

The spiral staircase touched land. A door opened. The heavenly bodies restored us to the light.

'Put on your hat,' said the astronomer. 'It's easy to catch a sunstroke.'

Beware of a touch of the sun. Beware of a touch of the infinite, I thought. On that terrace at Meudon shone the human sun, nearer than that of the scientists. That ball of fire, unable to consolidate itself, was familiar and obvious. Galileo was wrong. The astronomer was wrong. A little girl in a green dress was kicking a rubber ball with stars painted on it. A train was crossing the viaduct. White smoke rose above the roofs. Seated on the benches of the Grand-Dauphin the Meudon mothers and their children were warming themselves in the real sun. The world was vast and beautiful. Something on our own scale.

## II

### PRIVATE UNIVERSES

I LIKE the abrupt dive into an unknown life which one gets from a remark caught on the wing. This morning, on the pavement in front of the Lycée Pasteur in Neuilly (the dry leaves, brown and crackling, were sliding along the asphalt round me like skaters), I overtook an elderly couple. The wife was stooping, thin and yellow, the husband very upright, with a white beard. 'You criticize everything,' he was saying sadly, 'you criticize everything, you don't like anybody, and it's all because you're old and plain.' What a subject for a Flaubert novel, I reflected, or perhaps for a digression of Proust! The ageing woman's view of the world, a view altering not because people and things have changed, but because the face becomes lined, because the body shrivels like those dead leaves.

'To argue against Carlyle's "fire-eyed" despair is futile,' I thought as I passed on beyond the old people, 'because it is to argue against Carlyle's digestion.' Where had I read that the evening before? Oh yes! In an essay on Pascal by Aldous Huxley. He spoke there of those individual views of the world, impenetrable each to others, which men take as truths and yet are merely projections of their own states. Speak for yourself, Huxley was telling Pascal. Valéry once told him: 'The eternal silence of these infinite spaces does not terrify me. But the intermittent chatter of our small finite societies gives me reassurance. . . .' A sick man's philosophy, said Huxley. The fevered ascetic could not

comprehend both sensuality and happiness. Making a virtue of necessity, he decked out his weakness with pious epithets. Pascal's 'intolerable headache, griping of the bowels, and sundry other ills', made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for him to be a pagan. His sick body, as Huxley says, was *naturaliter christianum*. And (Huxley continues) not only did he accept sickness for himself, but he tried to impose it on others. He wanted mankind to accept a metaphysic and a psychology which presupposed dyspepsia, insomnia, griping of the bowels, and headaches. 'Those of us, however, who are blessedly free from these diseases will refuse to accept Pascal's neuralgia-metaphysic, just as we refuse to accept the asthma-philosophy of a more recent invalid of genius, Marcel Proust.'

Huxley is not far wrong, I reflected. (The children were emerging from the Lycée; each mother picked out her own. The wind was gathering strength. The leaves no longer slid, but rose spinning together like flights of crows). Huxley is not far wrong, but it is clear enough what a modern Pascal would retort; it is clear enough what Charles Du Bos would retort. 'Speak for yourself,' Du Bos would say in his turn to Huxley (and from his window one would see the basins of Versailles and the bronze deities, and on the wall that lovely portrait of Keats), 'speak for yourself. I find nothing less satisfying than that philosophy of the healthy and sensuous humanist, that universe of the hedonist physicist, the scientific dionysian. And nothing could be more spurious, for man can soar above his own body, and the sick mathematician calculates as well as, or better than, the athlete . . .'.—'But I am talking for myself,' answers Huxley, 'for myself and for those like me. That is my whole theme. I am a relativist in morality, as I am in metaphysics and in physics.' And rather sorrowfully Charles Du Bos would light his pipe.

Yes, I reflected, it would be an interesting discussion, but, like all discussions, a vain one, for the cosmos of Huxley and that of Du Bos are impenetrable. Leibniz was right. Each one of us is a monad, eternally sealed. Stay, what was that phrase which had once struck me so much?—'And the brain of the person we love best. . . .' I was taking a course on the early Greek philosophers. The benches were hard and narrow. I was a student. Beside me on the tiers was a fair-haired girl who filled my universe. 'We are alone,' the lecturer was saying. 'We are alone, eternally alone; we know nothing; we shall never know anything; and the brain of the person we love best remains irremediably closed to us.' I looked at my neighbour, imagining beneath her hair that bony wall, hard and brittle, and irremediably closed.

'Private universes,' said Huxley. (Black twigs were falling from the trees, and stood tremulously upright in the roadway.) Private universes, with no link of communication between them. The relations between Tolstoy and Turgenev for instance. Tolstoy blames, Tolstoy is a man who passes judgment. On the evening at Isnaña Poliana when Turgenev, to amuse the children, showed them how the *cancan* was danced in Paris, Tolstoy solemnly noted in his diary: 'Turgenev, *cancan*, depressing.' But to me, as a spectator, Turgenev is neither less great nor less profound than Tolstoy. He is a weak man. He himself would show his thumbs and ask: 'What can a man do with thumbs like these?' How could his universe be anything but different from that of Tolstoy, a strong, brutal, passionate man? Or from Dostoevski's? Or from Zola's?

In nearly all cases the formation of the individual cosmos can be reconstructed. There is education. I read that Ramakrishna beheld the goddess Kali in his trances. That is a world which I know I cannot enter. Whatever befall me, even if I become mad I know that I shall not see the



goddess Kali. But set my birth in a different country and cram my childish brain with other images, and who can say what my view of the world might have become? Byron discerned in the Universe tokens of the wilful activity of a cruel fate hostile to mankind. I myself see a powerful and pitiless universe, indifferent to the individual. Who is right? Byron was reared amongst the Calvinists. An infirmity, a sequence of unfortunate accidents, and travel in the East had moulded his fatalism. The optimist philosophy of Meredith is that of a good walker. Amiel's sentimentalism is physiological. The equilibrium of George Sand . . .

It was beginning to rain. A group walked past me, three girls, working girls no doubt, laundresses I dare say. One of them was carrying a big white basket, and was speaking with an obvious passion that gave her eloquence. 'Well,' she said, 'if you force me to it, very well, I'll tell you the whole truth . . . I wanted to have a velvet dress. . . .' A dive into another private universe. 'The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me,' said the sickly ascetic. 'I'll tell you the whole truth—I wanted to have a velvet dress . . .' says the laundry-girl. When she is old and plain she will find the world hateful, and an old man will tell her that she doesn't like anybody. Not only is the cosmos individual, but it alters with age. Who ever thought like Marcus Aurelius at twenty? When the passions settle down with the wearing out of the body, one's philosophy takes on more serenity. The man who is ill or dying rejects the philosophy that served him in health. In one single day the normal man changes his philosophy ten times over. The atheist has his moments of mysticism. 'The most religious of men,' I remarked to S., who is a devout Catholic, 'doubts at least once a day.'—'Once!' he answered. 'A hundred times a day! For my own part, I think that the man who believes fully in his religion for five minutes a day is a great

believer.' But most men do not admit these things. They have a spiritual patriotism, and exercise a mental censorship over themselves. They are, as Huxley says, chauvinists of mysticism, chauvinists of agnosticism. And yet, I wondered, is there not a common universe which would embrace all these universes, a country of the monads, a truth that is communicable? For, I reflected as I reached my own door, if I can understand Pascal's universe and Huxley's universe, I am approaching a synthetic universe which seems to be of a different sort. That truth is relative, is an absolute truth.

But just then my key slipped into the lock, and my universe was transformed

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### III

## THE MYTH OF MYTHS; OR, THE RENUNCIATION OF THE ABSOLUTE

### (i)

IN his preface to the 'Lettres Persanes', Valéry has shown that the era of order is the empire of fictions. Human societies are made possible by the acceptance of serviceable myths. It is untrue that incest is forbidden by the Gods. It is untrue that Justice always overtakes the guilty. It is untrue that Jupiter protects those who sacrifice victims to him. But if a large number of men lend the support of credence to such 'houses of enchantment', that will suffice to enable these structures to provide a shelter for these men.

The pagan images are succeeded by the Christian and the civil images, but civilizations are always supported by abstract fictions. The Law is strong, not because of the omniscience of the police (nothing remains easier than the unpunished crime), but because the myth of the Law has its temple in our spirit. Kings, Ministers and Parliaments hold sway, not because they represent a real power (their armies are only composed of their own subjects), but because a convention admitted by all sees in their persons an incarnation of the fictitious forces.

And then, 'in order, heads become bolder'. The myths and conventions are scrutinized disrespectfully; their true nature and their transparent weakness are exposed; men resent the obedience they have given them. The individual,

whose desires have been so long dammed by this imaginary wall, reproaches himself for his scruples and cowardice. The day of the emancipated and the 'enlightened' mind is dawning. Sincerity and revolution become myths in their turn. The convention of the unconventional, the most tyrannical of all, succeeds the other. 'Disorder and the status of *de facto*, of physical violence, revive at the expense of order.' Before long there must come a renewed 'desire for police or for death'.

## (ii)

Such, for the ten or twelve thousand years since men have existed and lived under governments, have been the ebb and flow of human societies. The Roman Empire did not outlive the myths which it had deified; the ensuing disorder made the fortune of the Asiatic theologies. The eighteenth-century philosophers, believing that they recognized the myth underlying royal power, cut off a King's head in order to convince themselves that he was a mere man, and then placed a crown on the head of a man in order to worship the myth of an Emperor.

Are men, then, fated to this alternation of order and disorder? Must civilizations necessarily crumble one after another? Are the sufferings of anarchy the only thing that can recall us to a respect for those conventions without which no society can live? It seems as if some wiser race would break free from this Wheel. But the conventions accepted by other days are not necessarily the best. They sometimes require transformation. How would they be so transformed if not by those who deny them?

## (iii)

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Order, Conventions—Upsetting of Conventions—new Conventions. The myth begins by being a myth, that is to say, an affirmation, *verbum*, a word, and is then made flesh. The myth is graven upon the human body. After ten thousand years of life in society, the thinking and sentient man is not the same as the wild man of the primæval forest. The appetites of the individual remain strong. He still suffers from the repressions and constrictions imposed on him by the Laws. But upon the individual instincts there has been superimposed a social instinct.

The complete individualist who rejects the Conventions to attain self-mastery (Gide's 'Prodigal Son' and Byron's 'Corsair'), finds neither equilibrium nor happiness. The herd is there within him, despite himself. It is not by 'society' that he stands condemned: society is a myth from which man can free himself. But the image of society that exists within each one of us is not a myth, but an indestructible reality. The herd instinct is as powerful as hunger or thirst or lust. The man lost in the desert and certain of never again setting eyes on men, who yet killed a child or violated a girl, would have no further peace with himself. The Law Court is a 'house of enchantment', but 'the moral law within our hearts' is not. A sin against society, or against God, can be imaginary, but not so the sin against man. The social man was a fiction, but from that fiction he was born.

(iv)

So a distinction must be drawn between those new, and also quite formal, conventions, which remain for us as images or words, and those others which, assimilated by hundreds of generations, have become things of instinct and substance. The former may become objects of criticism or revolt; but revolt against the latter is rebellion against one-

self, of which the individual will perish 'The sense of modesty is neither Victorian nor Christian, but human' Marriage laws will change, marriage itself will perhaps vanish to give place to new forms of union but a certain sexual discipline, like courage, will retain a value of its own

Private experience shows us that the myth thus transformed into instinct is more potent than any social or divine convention I do not believe that I shall be struck by Jove's thunderbolt if I break my oath, nor do I believe that I shall be damned if I fail in a solemn promise, but I do know that I shall despise myself if I do not keep a promise made to a child Justice has been a myth, but men have ended by creating the Gods

## (v)

Even when the social myths have become instincts, can they withstand the analysis that betrays their hidden nature? The end of the Roman Empire saw philosophers who, for reasons of political prudence would have liked to prop up the images of the Gods on their plinths But Jupiter failed as a serviceable convention from the day that he was recognized as a convention Suppose that the Prodigal Son having observed in his mind and flesh these strong resistances of social nature, is able to label them and recall their origins will he not then have exorcised them?

It seems to me that the human spirit can escape this form of destruction, and even that *the whole mental drift of our time is towards a respect for certain fictions accepted as fictions*

Science is renouncing the knowledge of the absolute, and no longer claims to build up a true system of the world It puts forward hypotheses which enable us to explain known facts, and seem also to enable the forecasting of facts unknown It is ready to alter these hypotheses should they cease to accord with the phenomena The scientist is quite



aware that the electron is a fiction, but in so far as our means of observation enable us to judge, everything happens as if this fiction were a reality. One day, the electron will doubtless be condemned. But this acceptance of relativity does not make science an impossibility. It ensures the solidity and the future of science. Jupiter dies when he is recognized as a fiction, because his priests had pointed to him as absolute. But the hypothesis does not die, it is transformed.

It is desirable that politics, following the example of science, should renounce a knowledge of the absolute, and consent to respect conventions (known to be such) so long as they remain useful. Anger against political myths is no less insane than would be a rebellion against the ether or a rising against the Hertzian waves. The King of England is a myth, but a convenient, and therefore a venerable, myth. The right of property is a fiction. It is permissible to regard that fiction as out-of-date, as likewise to consider it indefeasible, but to hate it is comical, and to worship it is puerile. Science cannot live without hypotheses, nor human societies without those images. A people destroys one system of conventions only to bow down before another.

(vi)

Myths are condemned by relativity inasmuch as they are dogmas, but *qua* myths they are upheld by it. The human mind is simultaneously aware of its impotence and its strength. Impotence, in its straining after an absolute; strength, in its readiness to limit the search to purely human ends. Many political and moral conflicts in the past have sprung from the refusal to admit that conventions were no more than conventions, or from the refusal to understand that, notwithstanding their conventional nature, they were necessary. It would seem that our time is at last ready to accept images *qua* images. We know Justice to be a myth,

but we also know that no society, no human life worthy of being lived, can survive without it—'Does this generation, then, believe in nothing?'—Say rather, that it desires freedom to treat fictions as fictions. But what does that matter if it believes in the necessity of the fictions? What does it matter if it believes in the myth of myths—in the necessity of maintaining human society through respect for contracts? *'The era of order is the empire of fictions.'*

## IV

### CREATION OF THE GENEVA MYTH

#### (i)

OVER a great part of this planet men are protected against all violence by the transparent and fictitious sword of Justice. 'You can go unarmed from London to Paris,' says Ramsay MacDonald.—'Because of the policemen,' answers Paul-Boncour. But the policeman himself is a fiction. The instincts of several thousands of passers-by are not restrained by that single man in uniform in the middle of the Place de l'Opéra or Piccadilly Circus, but by the majority of civilized men, of whom the policeman is the symbol and who would rally, if need be, to the defence of the law. In practice the police only rarely appeal to this unwritten contract. The State asks nothing of us because we have promised it everything. So great is the strength of societies that in them the image takes the place of action. In the oldest periods of history this image has to be something real; a sword is borne before the early kings and rods before the consuls. Then the image itself becomes superfluous, and the myth holds sway by force of a habit of trust and of unspoken consent.

#### (ii)

And yet these hidden forces, ensuring so silently and easily the tranquillity of individuals, seem to be impotent when whole peoples are concerned. Of their own accord men give up wearing coats of mail and walking abroad

armed, and, in order to protect what they hold most dear (*their persons, their families, their goods*), they place their trust in words and images; but they are afraid of each other as soon as they view each other in the form of nations. They set up courts of international justice, but have no faith in the power of these tribunals. And their lack of faith is enough to nullify that power in actual fact. The myth can exist only in the minds of the faithful.

(iii)

What would the Geneva myth have to be, in order to ensure peace in the world? It would have to be to the relations of the peoples what the Justice myth is to those of individuals. If all the denizens of the civilized world could be brought to believe, (a) that any conflict between them would be judged with as much impartiality as can be expected from a human tribunal; (b) that the decisions of this tribunal cannot be infringed without facing a clash with invincible powers; and (c) that every nation in the world is ready to join a League of Nations, so that any possible aggressor may be treated as a bandit,—then the notion of a revolt against the sentence would be manifestly absurd. Such a revolt would only occur as it were accidentally, like a crime in a well-policed country. The peoples, like individuals in the past, would have accepted the rule of law. The myth of the international tribunal would be born. Like all myths, it would operate through its fictitious presence, and at Geneva the aeroplanes of the League of Nations would correspond to the policeman on duty at the doors of the Law-Courts.

(iv)

To certain Frenchmen it seems that the Geneva myth could have been brought to birth by the Protocol of 1924.

But that Protocol was rejected by Great Britain, as the League of Nations itself was rejected by the United States. To Frenchmen that attitude resembles that of a vigorous individual who says: 'Nobody has greater belief than myself in tribunals and in the necessity of justice, but don't ever count upon me in putting a decision into execution.' The instant result of such a resolve, if adopted by all the citizens of a country, would be a return to the state of nature and individual self-defence. The myth of public security would be destroyed. It would no longer be possible to walk abroad unarmed. All potential thieves and murderers would become such in fact. The man refusing his signature to the social pact would find himself forced to endless combat, whereas, under 'the empire of fictions', he is never called upon for his promised support.

In international life things might well be likewise. If one country, tempted to attack another, were sure of mustering against itself the whole economic, financial and military power of the world, the act of aggression would not take place. The participants would have nothing to give because they would have promised everything, whereas between 1914 and 1918 they were brought to give everything because they had promised nothing.

(v)

The tragic character of this epoch lies in the fact that peace could have been assured in it, not for always (men do not build for eternity), but for a long time, if the peoples so desirous agreed upon the method of its maintenance. But whereas a Frenchman desires to bind himself and bind others by a contract similar to the social contract, the English and Americans view such a contract with misgivings, and decline, in their own words, to become 'policemen for the world'. But the policing of the world would be a pacific under-

taking. There would not be much to do. The policeman keeps the peace by his presence, not with his fists. It needs nothing more than the image of a blockade, the phantoms of great fleets ready to starve the peacebreakers, to impel the wavering statesman towards a lawful solution. In New York the traffic policeman is replaced at night by a red lamp, but the driver pulls up when confronted by that symbol.

(vi)

Respect for such a myth does not imply that men have suddenly become good, generous and reasonable, nor even that they have forsworn the use of the institution of Geneva for the safeguarding of their particular interests. The attitude of the nations towards the League ought to be that of two individuals laying their cause before a civil tribunal. Each is anxious to win his case, but at the same time the disputants are citizens subject to the laws. They pay their taxes, and therefore their judges, and they never question the actual *idea of the court*. There are many who think it chimerical to imagine that a similar state of mind could one day become that of the European governments. Perhaps our great-grandchildren will have even more difficulty in understanding how it was that men, for several thousand years, were able to believe in the myth of war. But it is also possible that weaknesses, misunderstandings and waverings may render the acceptance of the rule of law impossible. In that event, as the advances of destructive science are swifter than those of the minds who conceive it and ought to stem its current, we should behold all too soon the end of a European civilization.

## V

### THE ABSOLUTE IN THE RELATIVE

ORDER and disorder are co-existent in the universe. Order, because man observes fixed laws therein; disorder, because the desires of living beings do not coincide therein with actuality. The aim of every civilization is to profit by natural order to induce a human order. Experience has shown that this is possible.

The natural order allows of the forecasting of events, but does not allow of this in every case. In particular the happenings that affect us most, those depending on the passions, are unforeseeable to the scientist. The human order allows of forecasting in more frequent instances because it is abstract. Societies built by human minds, and based upon a few simple principles, are more readily intelligible than the complexity of the natural universe.

Order is a good in itself. The possibility of foresight is the most precious good. Nothing is more distressing to man than doubt and anxiety. That is why ceremonies have from primitive times been pleasing to the peoples: by controlling words and actions they suppress for a moment the anxiety of expectation. Ceremonies are to be found in every civilization. The Soviet Government has its own as the Catholic Church has; the pygmies of Central Africa have theirs, and the citizens of Washington theirs. It suffices to witness 'Parsival' to realize that if the theatre resumed its ceremonial character it would recover its ancient prestige. Europe will begin to exist when there are European ceremonies.

Order is a good in itself, and therefore every organization, even if it be bad, is something better than anarchy. There, no doubt, lies the sense of Goethe's saying that he preferred an injustice to a confusion. I prefer an injustice to a confusion, because confusion is itself injustice. But the lovers of order must as far as possible make ready the paths of justice. Unjust laws open the way for disorder.

Laws are 'the necessary connections arising from the nature of things'. They are the relations between two orders—the order of institutions, and the order of facts. Where a constant connection exists, the variation of one term is matched by that of the other. Whenever facts change, institutions must alter. Neither the Roman Empire, nor the Holy Roman Empire, the absolute monarchies, the plutocracies which to day are styled democracies, nor the rule of the Soviets, are external forms. The data of a problem being what they are, only certain solutions are possible, but if the data are modified, the first solutions cease to be true. Peoples, like individuals, are always on a tight-rope: none can stand there motionless.

But does not human nature contain certain fixed elements to which there correspond certain fixed elements in laws? If one term of the connection (*facts*) contains constant alongside of variable data, must not the other term (*institutions*) be composed in the same manner?

One primary fixed element appears to be the survival in all human beings of an animal nature alongside of a social nature. The 'original sin' of the Bible and the 'repressed unconscious' of the psychiatrist, are but names for that violent, lustful beast which has to be chained and placated. Laws, both religious and civil, have to resolve this twofold problem. They are well framed when they maintain an even balance between protection and liberty, badly framed when they go beyond the point of balance between the two tendencies.



Puritanism is an example of bad laws in the direction of excessive protection; and others no less dangerous in the direction of excessive freedom can be imagined.

The bonds of the family are a second fixed element. An institution like marriage has been altered to allow for economic and spiritual changes. But the principle holds good. Women have not found happiness in complete emancipation. The psychological data in the problem of the child are no longer entirely the same as they were a century ago, but a large number of these data have not altered. It is prudent to be slow in adjusting codes to ephemeral standards of morality. One function of law is to keep the verbal expression from outstripping the instincts.

Supreme amongst the constant data is the need for order itself, and the concomitant necessity of a hierarchy. Human order is an abstract order which is valid only through clarity. Where everybody is a ruler, that abstract order will find itself supplanted anew by the anarchy of the world of passions.

The social order can be stable only if the relation institutions  
facts is constant. Every variation in that connection is matched by an injustice, and every injustice by a disorder. The unwavering care of the true friend of order is to adjust institutions to facts. Disraeli made the Conservative Party a popular party. That was no paradox. An intelligent conservative is always a reformer.

## VI

### POLITICAL STABILITY IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND

LOOKING at the history of France and England during the past few years, one is struck by the frequency of political oscillations in France. To many Englishmen it was particularly surprising to see the French Chamber upsetting a ministry in the course of such weighty deliberations as the Naval Conference, as also to observe the downfall, on the first day of its life, of the Cabinet which had replaced it. 'Such a thing,' says the Englishman, 'is inconceivable in our country. In England, if the voting in the House of Commons showed that a stable majority was impossible, the Prime Minister would take steps to dissolve Parliament, and a general election would show just where the real majority in the country lay. Why isn't it so in France? Why don't the French modify a constitution that makes continuity of policy so difficult?'

#### (1)

It is misleading to lay the blame for political instability in France on the Constitution of 1875. That Constitution does not forbid the formation of great parties taking their turn in power, as the Whigs and Tories, Liberals and Conservatives did so long in England, or as the Democrats and Republicans have done in the United States. It allows for, and admits of, dissolution.

In point of fact, no President of the Republic has exercised

this right since 1877. Marshal MacMahon then dissolved the Chamber, but he did so very clumsily and at the wrong moment, and the electors retorted with a slap in the face by returning the same majority. Ever since that abortive move, the idea of dissolution, which ought to appear both lawful and natural, has become associated in Frenchmen's minds with the idea of the *coup d'état*, an image which has haunted the Republicans since the 18th of Brumaire and the 2nd of December. After more than forty years the memory of MacMahon remains an historic cause of instability by jamming a useful gear-wheel in the parliamentary machine.

Now, contrast the feelings of a French deputy with those of an English Member of Parliament, towards the ministry in power, assuming both men to be more or less equally endowed with ambition and patriotism. If the English politician should vote against his party and help to upset a Cabinet, what can he hope for? Nothing advantageous. He will put himself outside his party, and that will make his re-election difficult, if not impossible. He will have no chance of replacing any of the ministers, as the Cabinet will almost certainly have recourse to a dissolution. What is more, this dissolution will oblige him to face fresh election expenses before the normal time. Even if, through some single vacancy, he joins the ministry without there being a dissolution, a commendable custom obliges him to seek re-election in his own constituency. If he turns against a party, he can do so only by carrying his constituency with him. That is not easy. The personal interest of the English politician, therefore, weighs down the balance in favour of stability. In England no prizes are held out to the breakers of Cabinets.

In France such prizes exist, and the deputy's personal interest weights the scales in favour of instability. What need he fear if he helps to turn out the ministry? Will he be

forced to run the gauntlet of an election once more? Certainly not, for we have seen that custom has hardened against dissolutions. Will he be turned out of his own party? Possibly, but there are so many parties in the Chamber that he will immediately find another. Will he, on the other hand, succeed to the place of the defeated minister? Admittedly, he has a chance. The head of a government, in forming his ministry often takes account of the support given him by this deputy or that in some skilful manoeuvre against the previous Cabinet. Whence, to even the most honest of French politicians, comes a temptation. Custom has held out rewards to the upsetters of ministries.

(II)

The temptation would be less strong if power were disputed by large organized parties. Such parties would themselves maintain their own internal discipline. In opposition they would have their 'Shadow Cabinets' prepared to take up the real portfolios after a favourable election. Nobody in England at the time of the 1929 Election was in any doubt as to whom the King would summon if the Labour Party carried the day, everyone knew it would be Mr Ramsay MacDonald, just as they knew it would be Mr Baldwin in the event of a Conservative victory. There may be a struggle within the party for the position of leader (and such struggles are frequent), but in Parliament itself a certain loyalty is traditionally looked for.

In France, great parties do not exist. In the Chamber will be found Communists, United Socialists, Republican Socialists, Radical Socialists, a Radical Left, a Social and Radical Left, Republicans of the Left, National Republicans, a Republican Democratic Union, Independents of the Left, *Independents, deputies so independent that they decline to form part of the group of Independents, non party mem*

bers, and a deputy who is not a member of the non-party party. Why this granulation of parties?

Every people has its qualities and its faults. Each must be governed with due regard for both sets of characteristics. In governing the English, their pride must not be overlooked. In governing the French, it must never be forgotten that they are individualists. France has shown her capacity for discipline in time of war and in time of financial crisis. In calm weather the French love to criticize their captains. Since the two Napoleonic experiments in particular, a large number of Frenchmen have harboured an almost instinctive horror of any man who climbs above his fellows too high and too quickly. For a politician, popularity in the country at large is almost a source of weakness before the Chambers.

This deep sense of the equality of men, this stubborn individualism, hinders any blind loyalty to the leaders of a great party. In any parliamentary group, apart from a few mute, ingenuous and submissive figures, every deputy with a shred of talent thinks that he ought to be at least an Under-Secretary of State, and that he will be. If he disagrees with the senior members of his group, or even if, without disagreeing on doctrine, he observes that he is outweighed by too many brilliant and exacting personalities, he is tempted to form a new group. Thus, from time to time, a little swarm of youthful malcontents is to be seen, and round them will be buzzing men who have broken away from neighbouring groups.

The political game favours secessions of this kind. As no great party is numerous enough to assume power alone, every ministry leans upon a coalition of factions. To obtain their support it must open its doors to their representative men. Thus, a man who, in the rank-and-file of the Radical Party, would never have been a minister, will become one because

he is the president of some social and anti-clerical group which he founded himself with a score of friends and is needed by the ministry to round off its majority.

The method of recruiting parliamentary commissions, their inflated importance, and the hierarchical promotion from a *rappart* to a portfolio, all tend towards the same confusion. Minor posts are coveted with the same intensity as major ones, because the former lead to the latter. The proportional representation of the several groups in every commission produces the same measuring-glass operations that go to the compounding of a new ministry, and lead likewise to the further splitting-up of factions. An ambitious man obtains 'his finance commission' by joining in with fifteen others who want something else. Finally, as successful work within a commission is the image of, and the prelude to, success in the Assembly itself, men strive less there to collaborate with the ministry than to hamper it and prepare its downfall. A Premier is so fully occupied with self-protection against his successors that he has no time left to rule, and the supplanters will complain in their turn, when they have won power, of the bad faith of their opponents.

But these ambitions should not be singled out for condemnation. They exist in every country. Spinoza has shown that men's passions are always more or less the same, and that the good institutions are those which take advantage of human failings to lead a nation to a wise conduct of affairs, just as animal-trainers make use of greed and fear to obtain harmony of movements. The English politician as a man is very like the French politician. Like the latter he is mean, generous, ambitious, jealous, admirable and detestable. But as the rules of the game are different, the Englishman is led to shape his political career within a team, the Frenchman to blow up the party. (Examples of schism exist in the political history of both England and the United States—

Disraeli and Roosevelt—but they are fewer, and their pretexts lie in rather deep ideological differentiations.)

(iii)

Individualism, as a trait of national character, is not the sole reason that has prevented the existence in France of great parties holding power alternately. Great parties correspond to simple divisions in the country. In the United States, beneath the cleavage of Democrats and Republicans lies the opposition of North against South. In England the cleavage of Whigs and Tories divided the rebellious nobles from the partisans of the King and the Established Church. When that line disappeared, it was replaced by the line dividing Conservatives from Liberals, which marked off two philosophies. To-day, although the situation is slightly more fogged, the cleavage of Conservatives and Labour remains fairly clear. In France the lines of severance are more numerous.

Before the Revolution, France had more internal fissures than other countries. Privileged seigneurs, exempt from taxation and hardly ever in local residence, were more remote from the peasant than was the English squire, himself often close akin to the country folk and subject to the same taxation as his farmers. The Church annoyed an otherwise devout people by its privileges and its alliance with the nobility. Men spoke of 'Church and Château', and had no liking for one or the other. The Revolution came to widen this fissure between two nations. To the long-standing hatred on one side there was opposed, in the other group, a just resentment. It should not be forgotten that there exists in Paris a small graveyard where the oldest French families are buried beside their guillotined ancestors whose bodies were flung into the common trench. That cleavage of Revolution and Counter-Revolution tends slowly to become

obliterated but it has been, and still remains, an important feature of the French political landscape. Only lately the president of the Radical Party was speaking in the Chamber of 'Whites against Blues'.

Now, it should be noted that the division of Revolution against Counter-Revolution does not follow the same lines as that of Riches against Poverty. In many provinces a rich peasant will not be in the same party as his landlord of the chateau. The Riches Poverty cleavage might possibly be the dividing line between two great parties—a socialist and a conservative party. Between the two (and without so much as taking into account of the innumerable shades) France can show a very large radical party grouping together both wage-earners and middle-class people. There we discern a new line of fissure. Clericalism and Anticlericalism which does not imply for or against religion (nearly all Frenchmen are Catholics *de facto*), but for or against the political influence of the Church. Thus, some modest bourgeois, thrifty, quiet living and a hundred times more conservative than many English Conservatives will vote for the radical candidate because of an invincible suspicion of 'the curés'. The sentiment is astonishing when one knows the poverty and inoffensive virtue of the majority of French parish priests, but it is linked up with ancestral memories. These memories turn proposals affecting schools and education which elsewhere would not be really party questions, into grave political issues.

To these main features of the relief map must also be added innumerable secondary folds in the land. Reflect that France has clefts of North and South, of industrial regions and agricultural regions, farmers and wine growers, that even amongst the socialists there are nationalists and internationalists, amongst the radicals, purists and opportunists. Reckon in also questions of personalities of the small



groups gathered round a leader because he is useful to them, and it can be understood why it was almost impossible in France to form the two large *blocs* whose alternation in power would ensure a more stable political life.

It must be added that, in France, the crystallization of such *blocs* is undesirable, for the violence of political passion would tend quickly to give it a revolutionary character.

(iv)

'Well and good,' the Englishman will say. 'But when once the powder of your groups has coalesced into a *bloc* numerous enough to take over power and uphold a ministry, why doesn't it remain solid through at least one legislature? When a Chamber has been elected on a certain programme, how does it contrive to put the opposition into power? For that is what we've seen happen twice during the past year or two. The Chamber elected in 1924, the Chamber of the *cartel*, of the Left, ends off its four years under the authority of a man whom it began by setting aside—Poincaré. The Chamber of 1928, the Chamber of the National Republicans, the Centre, evolves so far as to make possible the appearance, if only for a day, of a Radical ministry. Why is this? And through what machinery?'

It is not very hard to grasp. As parties in France are rather ill-defined, the discipline of the groups is not strict. It is much more so in opposition than in power. It has been a little more so in the life of the present legislature. Certain groups have expelled deputies who did not respect the collective decisions. But the outlaw can always tack himself on to the neighbouring group. In the centre sections of the Chamber are to be found 'hinged' groups, half of whose members vote for, half against, the ministry. These groups exert great powers of attraction, because their medial position enables them always to have some of their members in the

ministry, whether it be a government representing the Right or the Left in the Assembly, and because their numerical balancing power in a majority entitles them to a representation proportionally greater than their effectives. If need be, the errant deputy will find refuge amongst the independents. And so an opposition, like a government, can always try to crumble away the hostile *blocc*.

To that end, there are various paths. The ministry has posts, decorations, cordiality at its disposal. The opposition can make use of promises and play upon disappointed ambitions. Above all it has on its side, first, that sense of weariness produced by any lengthy reign ('I am tired of hearing him called "the Just"'), and also, the inherent difficulties of all action. A man in power makes mistakes. Leave him rope enough and he will hang himself, as Disraeli used to urge. That is what nearly always happens. When the opposition feels the ministry to be shaky it can raise some issue which alarms the electorate, and so put the deputies of the majority in such a position that they must choose between their loyalty and their re-election. It is not loyalty that wins the day.

So unstable is the equilibrium of a Chamber that frequently the movement of one sitting will alter the whole political situation. A famous politician has said that a speech might sometimes have modified his opinions, but never his vote. Witty, but inaccurate. Fifty votes can be shifted over by a deft speech, or an awkward one. A French Chamber is susceptible to eloquence. Unlike the British Parliament, it is not formed of watertight parties on which nobody can hope to produce a reaction. It contains hesitating *individuals* who are swayed by the passions born of eloquence. I have seen Briand win over a hostile Chamber. I have seen Briand and Franklin-Bouillon, within ten minutes of each other, win the unanimous applause of the

Chamber for speeches urging totally opposed arguments. To an able tactician, no battle on such a field is utterly hopeless.

(v)

It is sometimes urged that there are advantages in this instability, and that it is perhaps even preferable to the two-party system. Does it not enable the currents of public feeling to be more accurately reflected? Does it not keep the deputies free from too rigid a loyalty towards a party chief when he is seen to be incapable of holding power?

Nothing, as a matter of fact, proves the English or American methods to be superior to the French. The American Constitution, it is true, ensures the stability of the Cabinet, but if its members are in conflict with either of the Houses of Congress, that stability is useless, because no measures can be passed into law. In England, for some years, political life was falsified by the existence of three parties, and by the fact of power being held by a minority government. In any case, no political institutions are good at all times and in all places for a quite abstract man. Answering the Athenian who asked what was the best form of rule, Solon wisely asked: 'For what people, and at what time?' Laws are the machinery intended to use the individual passions for collective ends, just as the sail may serve the mariner to use the force of contrary winds to drive his vessel forward. The proper rigging depends on the seas he is sailing, the strength of the wind, the weather, and the vessel. The American Constitution or the British Constitution would not provide the right canvas for the good ship France.

But a machine can always be improved, and the French one does not seem at present to be working to full capacity. That is no reason for scrapping it, but rather for overhauling it. Between the two-party system and the present anarchy of ambitions there should be room for a better ordering of

political life. Do there exist simple remedies, adapted to the historical formation of the country, which would abolish the weak points in the motor? The question should be put to the technical experts; here one can only try to indicate a few of the vulnerable points.

(a) We have shown how the constant splitting-up of parties makes loyalty difficult and makes treason the path to power. Cannot this disruptive tendency be checked? The Socialist Party, and more recently the Radicals, have succeeded in imposing discipline on their members. Would it not be possible to form five or six large parties to cover the whole of the Chamber? And would not this re-grouping be facilitated by a slight alteration of the control levers of procedure? For instance, the method of electing commissions could be changed, and any commission entrusted with the examination of an important project, such as the Young Plan should be appointed by the government departments. This would mean the abolition of the prize held out to the party of fifteen members. It may seem a small reform; but the surgeon knows that it is often by touching an apparently secondary organ in a diseased body that the disquieting symptoms disappear.

(b) The first advantage of a re-grouping of parties in more compact masses would be greater ease in distinguishing the opposition leaders, and in allowing them to collaborate in certain questions with the government itself. This usage exists both in England and America; established in France it would be indispensable. Political liberty would not be lessened; the struggle would go on with equal energy on the points where it would be thought necessary, but the ruin of the country for questions of personalities would be avoided. To give a recent example, I have never yet met a deputy, of the Right or the Left, who did not admit, speaking as man to man, that the budget voted in March, 1930, was demagogic

and dangerous. All the good work of four years was sacrificed in a few hours. The financial consequences of these votes will cramp the grip of all statesmen, whatever their opinions, who come into power during the existence of the next legislature. But no party could take responsibility for compromising the re-election of its members by making them take up a hostile attitude to measures that seemed to have a popular appeal. An understanding between the head of the government and the opposition leaders would nullify such responsibilities by sharing them out.

Agreement between opposition and government, when a matter of national interest was involved, would have to become a rule, and the existing camaraderie would have to be replaced by definite collaboration. The opposition would thereby lose the advantage of certain skirmishes, but would gain a greater measure of tranquillity for itself when its own turn for power came. It is striking to note how all men taking office in recent years have been smitten, one after the other, by a 'persecution complex'. Herriot, Briand and Tardieu have all complained of the unfairness of the Chambers, and all with reason. The evil arises from the tendency of the opposition (whether of the Right or the Left) to forget too quickly that it is not, as in England, 'His Majesty's Opposition', but the opposition of the French Nation.

(c) It would be wise to widen the powers of the President of the Chamber and allow him sometimes to recall the Assembly to its true rôle. Control is like certain toxins: in proper doses it is necessary, and stimulates the executive system; in excessive quantities it is fatal. For some years, in France, the organism of control has tended to become a permanent government. M. Poincaré recently showed how the war period transformed the great parliamentary commissions into irresponsible ministries. A vote of confidence is now put forward almost daily, and often several times on the same

subject. Clearly the Government cannot be given the right to refuse a debate. But could not the President of the Assembly be given the right to prevent the multiplication of debates which are identical with one another?

(17)

The experts, when they venture to speak out, mention these remedies and some others which would be easy to apply. The rôle of the 'man in the street' is only to draw attention to the fact that the national organism is not at the moment entirely sound. Not that instability is so great as people outside France suppose. In certain countries the surface looks solid and the rift is deep. In France the surface shows fissures and the depths are homogeneous. Precisely because the lines of cleavage are innumerable, there is little real opposition between the programmes of the different heads of the government. Certain men are labelled 'Left', others 'Right'. If one did not know their political pasts, it would be hard to understand why. In any case, the President of the Republic ensures a relative continuity by the choice of the men he calls upon. The President appears to be devoid of powers. Actually he is more powerful than the King of England, and can do much to correct, quite silently, the instability of parliamentary institutions.

But notwithstanding these counterweights, it is certain that governing with care for the general interest has been becoming too rare in France. If a few very simple adjustments to parliamentary formulas can (as politicians of all parties believe) induce personal interest to coincide with national interest, it is desirable that they should be carried out. Nothing can purge men of personal passions, but the rôle of the legislator is so to transform institutions that those very passions keep men moving along the paths of peace and loyalty.

## VII

### THE PAST AND FUTURE OF LOVE

AS the physical appearance of human beings, both men and women, has changed little for quite five thousand years, the observer is tempted to suppose that their sentiments and instincts have likewise remained the same. Hunger, thirst, sleep and love remain the essential needs of the human body.

But is it true that love is to-day what it was to an Egyptian lady of the time of Sesostris, to a Greek woman in Homer's day, to a thirteenth-century Frenchwoman. I don't think so. The social rules, conventional to begin with, have been transformed by time into instincts which have themselves transformed older instincts. Love, like the Gods, evolves, and we can distinguish certain laws of variation in the sentiment.

(a) *In a society where woman is a slave, passionate love does not exist.*

When Achilles is robbed of his captive woman, his fury rises from wounded pride; he is not 'in love' in the modern sense of the term. His thoughts are not of Briseis, but of the men who have stolen her from him. The captive herself knows that she is the prize of strength, and resigns herself. Things remain thus so long as physical strength plays a large part in human societies. The woman cannot struggle; she accepts her conqueror.

Helen admits the defeat of Paris and the triumph of

Menelaus She has known the meaning of desire Yielding to it, she is content to regard herself as the 'shameless woman' But when she has seen the Greeks attacking the walls of Troy, she resigns herself She recounts the episode to Telemachus with no embarrassment 'Whilst the women of Troy were wailing their despair, my heart rejoiced, for my mind was changed and already I was in hopes of returning to my home, I bewailed the fatal mistake into which Aphrodite had cast me on the day she led me thither, far from my beloved country, parting me from my daughter, from my marriage bed, and from my lord and husband, unsurpassed in wisdom and in beauty' And Menelaus answers 'Yes, all that you say, woman, is in conformity with truth'

Under the reign of force, one does not seek to vanquish a mind, or to make oneself pleasing one takes hold of the object of desire, and feelings follow facts as best they can

(b) *Passionate love is born in a society wherein the strength of social conventions overrules physical strength*

The social conventions do not shackle men so securely as physical strength They are open to argument, their validity can be questioned As soon as instinct raises its voice a little man is tempted to think that this validity is non-existent That is the moment of conflict between duty (that is the social being) and desire (that is the individual being) Type of such conflicts—the story of Tristram and Yseult Both respect the husband King Mark But they have drunk the magic philtre, and thereafter nothing could quench their mutual desire The philtre is to them what Aphrodite was to Helen, but whereas Helen, a woman in a primitive society, treated her adventure with an almost lighthearted common sense, Yseult can find refuge only in death

When once a total communion is desired, when once the



wish is to possess not only a body but a soul, then one is drawn fatally towards the desire for death, for it is only in death that possession can be enduring. This, the true romance form of love, is always the source of tragedies, because the lovers who have enjoyed for a moment the sense of possessing something perfect and superhuman, long to make that moment eternal. But it is the nature of all things human to be fleeting. Only death can hold them fixed, or give the illusion of so doing.

(c) *In a society where men and women are nearly always kept apart by work and the mode of life of the two sexes, the birth of chivalrous love is possible.*

I offer two examples: mediæval society, and the America of pioneer days.

Chivalrous love is a deification of woman. It cannot survive if men and women are constantly with each other. No woman, even the most lovable in the world, is a goddess. The man who lives with her learns her moments of weakness, her days of plainness as well as her virtues. Constant proximity wears down sentiment. The face that once seemed so beautiful, he no longer sees. He tires of those childhood memories, those stories which once seemed so delightful, and wants to hear no more of them.

On the other hand, when the woman is not seen, she daily approaches nearer and nearer to perfection. Don Quixote may be a caricature of the heroes in the romances of chivalry, but he is a caricature with very little distortion. He achieves great deeds for his Dulcinea del Toboso, a vulgar and ugly farm-wench. This is not ridiculous, but natural. As he never sees her, she is as good as any other woman. The knight-errant is, by definition, errant; he does not wear away his love in a common life.

To a certain extent the age of chivalry is recalled by the

America of the pioneers, and even (apart from the younger generation) by present-day America. There, too, woman is deified. To achieve high exploits for her sake is the aim of the majority of men. Nowadays it is a question not of giving battle to windmills or cleaving three giants in single combat, but of creating great factories and vanquishing rival bankers. But the goal is the same. The dollars thus won will be laid by the business man at the feet of his lady, just as were the trophies of vanquished knights.

And the deeper reason is identical. It is simply that men and women see little of each other. The knight-errant of Wall Street does not scout the highways of Europe for wrongs to redress, but he leaves home in the morning, lunches at the club, and comes home late. His wife goes off for a trip to Europe; and thus distant, she becomes the 'lady of his dreams'.

Chivalrous love is perhaps an artificial sentiment, but it is one that enhances a man by giving him a liking for sacrifice.

The common point shared by love as it was imagined by the chivalrous society of the Middle Ages, and love as conceived by Anglo-Saxon societies, is a horror of reality. Just as the knight-errant refused to know what his lady really was, the English or American novel for a long time strove to convert woman into an immaterial being, almost disembodied, except perhaps for lovely eyes and rosy lips. The realistic nature of love in women, the strength of their instincts, their failings, were all wilfully ignored, and women themselves encouraged a literature which made their own game so easy to play. Byron had already noted that women detested his 'Don Juan' because it was truthful. Bernard Shaw, in 'Man and Superman', demonstrated the material advantage that women have in self-protection through a romantic convention that shackles the man whilst

leaving the woman herself ample freedom, just because he turns a blind eye on her real nature.

But here again, the love described in the chivalrous romance or the English novels of 1880, is possible only in societies where men and women see little of each other.

We should note that chivalrous love contains an element of pride which does not exist in the passionate love of, say, Tristram or Fabrice del Dongo.

(d) *In a leisured society, and where men and women live in company, a flirtatious love and a laxity of morals arise to stifle chivalrous love.*

This transformation takes place in two stages. First comes leisure, which gives men and women time to reflect on their feelings and so teaches them to recognize the nuances, with their ever-increasing subtlety and complexity. Then arise the moralist writers, like those of France in the seventeenth century. A whole people caught the taste for these analyses, and has kept it to our own times.

But a society like that of the French seventeenth century, although it mingled the two sexes, still imposed strong bonds of restraint upon them. It was a religious society, with a powerful pressure of public opinion, and chivalrous love remained the ideal of its actual heroes (Louis XIV) no less than of its fictitious ones (Princesse de Clèves).

In the eighteenth century, with the weakening of religious beliefs, and with absolutism and security, morals became freer. Our cause of lax morality is boredom, and boredom waxes with prosperity. The noble sentiments of chivalrous love then give place to the petty guiles of physical love. These are the same in all ages and all lands. Examine the 'Ars Amatoria' of Ovid: it holds true for London in 1750, for Paris in 1840, for New York in 1930. The modern novel of America shows that there, too, the chivalrous period is

being succeeded by one of libertinism. Ernest Hemingway's 'The Sun Also Rises' is a book with the same remorseless sincerity of the novels of Marcel Proust in France, of Aldous Huxley in England. The pioneer's respect for an imaginary woman has vanished. Its place is taken by an intelligent, but depressing, clear-sightedness.

(e) *Freedom in morals leads back to simpler forms of love which bear some resemblances to the primitive forms.*

The youths and girls of the present day, going about together, bathing together, are much nearer to the ancient Greeks than to their own parents. If we compare the women's dress of 1929 with that of the preceding epochs, we find that it has a closer resemblance to that of the eighth century B.C. than to that of 1840. Osbert Sitwell has remarked that the women of Crete wore short and simple dresses which would not be out of place on Fifth Avenue. Pure physical desire, with no alloy of intellectual feeling, tends to assume a great place in life as it does in literature, and this attitude will doubtless cause the temporary disappearance of chivalrous morals. For some years past it has been the young girl who is becoming romantic. It was so in the day of Theocritus. But the day of Lancelot was to follow.

\* \* \* \* \*

What will be the future of love? Any prophecy is difficult. The social value of physical strength is lessening. The most powerful machines can now be handled by a woman or child. In all things, bodily strength will be replaced by mechanical strength. Nowadays women drive their own cars, and if we ever again see a war and an army, they will fire the heaviest guns and open the cylinder-taps to free the poison-gases. They can die as men die; they can fight as men fight, for a woman with a revolver is stronger than the

strongest of boxers. They pursue the same studies as men, and earn their living in the same occupations.

How do the consequences affect love? The human couple was first founded upon brute conquest and upon the slavery of woman. True, certain societies had a matriarchal form and had respect for woman, but even then she was dependent on man, the hunter and warrior, for her protection and nourishment. In order to dominate, she slowly, in the course of centuries, forged a weapon—coquetry, the art of pleasing; and gradually, with the help of poets and artists, she succeeded in establishing the fiction of chivalrous love, the humble devotion of man to woman. For a long time she used these weapons to conquer the strong man who could ensure her safety; in times nearer our own, she has used them to enthrall the rich man who ensures her economic liberty.

Economically, the modern woman will be less and less dependent on man. Her need for devotion will therefore be less. Capable of securing her own sustenance and her own safety, she will tend in love to seek greater equality and greater freedom of choice. She will no longer accept the masculine axiom which, in Europe at least, maintained that a woman's infidelity is serious whereas a man's is trifling.

With this companion, more closely resembling a man, it is possible that sentiments become less acute; sensuous friendships will arise between men and women, to which they will attach less importance than formerly. This is what is happening in Russia, where the words *love* and *fondness* are under a ban as such emotions are held to sap the strength of political passions. Many of the intelligent youth are anxious for the death of romantic love.

They are wrong, I think. Humanity would gain some time thereby; it would recover certain spiritual forces, and

be able to save certain luxury charges for which a great section of men now toil. But in this it would lose incalculable forces which have been generated by romantic love. Directly or indirectly, it has inspired our finest works of art, our greatest works of action. Nearly the whole of our Western civilization is born of a social system based upon respect for woman and upon the value of love.

I do not say that other systems could not have produced good results. Acceptable philosophies have been engendered from different values in the Far East. But for the moment we ourselves have no values to set up in replacement. It can already be observed in many young people that the lapsing of sentimental love is balanced by gloom, bitterness, and a cynical distaste for life.

In young Russia the stage and novels display, especially amongst women, a regret for the romantic convention. It is impossible to find a motive force in life to replace this wonderful blend of physical desire and intellectual unity. 'Physical desire,' said Proust, 'has the wonderful power of giving intelligence its due and of giving a solid basis to moral life.' The problem of the generation following ours will be to re-fashion (notwithstanding the great sensual freedom which has by now coloured our morals and will be slow to disappear) amorous friendships of a kind not unworthy of romantic love.

## VIII

### HYPOTHETICAL FUTURES

I HAVE been reading a few books written by physicists, chemists and biologists, on the future of their several sciences. Anticipations of this kind have always given me great pleasure; I enjoy pondering the probable image they offer of a mode of life which will perhaps be ours. The modern prophets are modest, and for half a century now discoveries have been outpacing their predictions. In 1902 Wells shyly announced that heavier-than-air flying machines would perhaps begin to be useful for warlike purposes about 1950. To-day's scientific paradox is to-morrow's commonplace.

For some years it has looked as if wireless television, the transmission of a moving image from a broadcasting station, will become readily practicable. Before long all telephone subscribers will certainly be able to see and hear others at a distance, with the aid of an apparatus which will work by wireless, to be called perhaps the telephotophone. Pocket models will enable one to continue a conversation with a friend during a walk or a journey. Lovers will make their rendezvous at 4 h. 20 m. 16 s., wave-length 452. An ether police will keep certain wave-lengths for the secret communication of the Government. Terms of subscription will enable one to reserve a fixed wave-length for five, ten, or fifteen minutes, and in a certain direction. There will be wave-lengths for ladies only, others for educational institutions.

Life will be quite transformed by this continuous two-fold presence in image and sound. Absence and separation will drop several degrees in the scale of sentimental value. Lying will become more difficult. For some time we shall still retain control of the power to give or withhold visual communication at will, but later, thanks to a selenium-plated lens, we shall certainly be able to transmit whatever is visible from an aeroplane passing over a garden or a countryside. Besides, now that the long-distance control of aeroplanes by wireless is conceivable, we may imagine small appliances which any of us could control from bed, guiding them over a map while a screen would display the shifting images of the towns, streets and people over which the distant machines were flying.

One professor of physics threatens us with a more formidable invention for the coming century. It is certain, he argues, that human thought, being composed of words and images, must correspond to the emission of certain light and sound waves. These waves it will some day be possible to capture, the problem is only one of amplifiers. And thereafter, in any conversation, thanks to a sort of radioscope which everyone will have in his pocket, it will be possible to read the thoughts of one's friend whilst they are taking shape, and to ponder, simultaneously with him, the images that he is evoking. Conversation will then bear a close resemblance to what is now a solitary and silent meditation. A will look at B thinking for a moment or two, then he will think his answer and B will watch him thinking. This will mean the necessity of naturalness and the death of hypocrisy.

When communication over long distances becomes easy, speed of transport will be less important, but obviously can only increase. In theory, says one of my authors, speed is limited only by the speed of light. A more serious matter will be the total transformation of our methods of producing



energy. Coal and oil will be superseded, on the one hand, by maritime power-stations making use of the differences of temperature between superimposed currents, and on the other, by the wind, the force of which will be collected by perfected accumulators. These inventions will completely transform the distribution of industrial regions. The factories at present grouped round coal centres will slowly migrate towards districts where winds are constant. Certain desert territories, hitherto regarded as of no account, will become the most populous areas in the world. Wars will be fought to have and hold them. At the same time, when chemistry has re-fashioned most foodstuffs by synthetic methods, on a basis of atmospheric nitrogen, agriculture will almost certainly vanish. The appearance of the earth will change. Forests and garden will take the place of fields.

The sources of light which we now use are extremely primitive. Professor Haldane has said that 95 per cent. of the radiations of these heated bodies are invisible. The lighting of a lamp as a source of light, he declares to be a waste of energy almost equivalent to the burning of one's house in order to toast a slice of bread; and it may safely be prophesied that in fifty years' time light will cost one-fiftieth of its present cost, and darkness will be completely abolished in all towns.

That is alarming, but certain biologists are still more disturbing. They believe that the explanation of our emotional and sentimental life can be found in the abundance or shortage of the secretions of certain endocrine glands. 'Injections of the products of these glands would make people violent or timid, sensual or otherwise, just as desired. Assuming the existence of an oligarchic state, powerfully organized, it would be possible to inject a masterful temperament into the children of the ruling class, and a submissive frame of mind into the children of the proletariat.

Against the injections of the official doctors, the best opposition orators would be powerless. The only difficulty will lie in combining submissiveness at home with the ferocity that is required against the outside enemy. But official science would doubtless solve that problem.

A paradox? Certainly. Nevertheless, the following experiment was lately described to me by a French scientist.

Some virgin female mice are selected, and some newborn mice placed beside them. The grown mice go on eating and playing and running about without paying any heed to the little ones, and even let the latter die beside them without intervening. The same mice are injected with the products of certain glands. Instantly these amazons are changed into admirable mothers; they are seen to give up their play and concern themselves only with these children, who are not even their own; they even die in their defence. In this case we are dealing only with a simple and powerful elementary instinct. But reflecting on these experiments, we can foresee a day when skilful blends of glandular secretions will enable us to obtain shades of sentiment of increasing subtlety. There will be joint laboratories for psychologists and biologists, where novelists and scientists will collaborate in the production of ampoules of Fond Friendship (guaranteed free of all sensual elements); and just as certain excessively stimulating products are counteracted by others, intended to sustain the action of the heart where the stimulation affects it, so tablets will be compounded, which will combine verbal romanticism and inward indifference.

These are strange thoughts. Need we regard them as depressing? I do not think so. If our present-day life could have been very precisely described to the men of 1880, they would doubtless have thought it terrifying. But many of these men are still alive, and have imperceptibly adapted themselves to a mode of life which would then have struck

them as distressing and extravagant. And it will always be so. We do not know what life will be like for those of us who survive to 1957. But these survivors will no doubt find it normal and monotonous, and will turn inquisitive thoughts upon a future which we cannot so much as conceive.

## IX

### FRAGMENT FROM A UNIVERSAL HISTORY PUBLISHED IN 1992 BY THE UNIVERSITY OF . . .

MORALS—PURITANISM AND REPRESSIONS—FREUDISM  
AND ITS INFLUENCE—SUCCESS AND ABERRATIONS OF  
FREUDIANISM (1930-1940)—SYMPTOMS OF REACTION  
(1940-1950)—SCHMIDTISM—TRIUMPH OF SCHMIDT-  
ISM—REVERSAL OF VALUES

#### *Sexual Morality in the early Twentieth Century*

BEFORE the World War of 1914, especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries, official morality had remained very much the same as during the preceding century. True, even in England there were writers like Wells, Arnold Bennett, George Moore, and Galsworthy, who had ventured to treat sexual questions rather more boldly than the novelists of the Victorian epoch. Actually, and in the capital cities especially, morals were distinctly lax, but this laxity did not extend to the middle classes, and even in aristocratic or artistic circles was not openly admitted. In America as in England, puritanism was still powerful enough for a sentimental scandal to ruin the career of a statesman. Vices existed, as they always have existed in every human society, but to be tolerated they had perforce to borrow the mask of hypocrisy and the language of virtue . . .

#### *Freudism and its Influence 1910-1930*

The human animal, thus constricted by a rigid society,

took strange and perilous revenges. 'Repressed desires' (as they were later to be termed) took refuge in the unconscious, where they provoked grave discontents. An old seer of the eighteenth century, William Blake, had already proclaimed that '*he who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence*'. This pestilence took the form of nervous afflictions and mental disturbance, and above all roused a general sense of ennui, pessimism and anxiety, which was possibly one of the hidden causes of the War of 1914.

This is not the place to set forth the doctrine of Freud; but we know how this great Austrian doctor and psychologist showed that such repressions lay at the root of most nervous afflictions. This teaching met with no great success in the Latin countries, which, having always enjoyed a measure of sexual liberty, were unfamiliar with the malady and had no need of the remedy, but in the Teutonic, and particularly the Anglo-Saxon countries, it was a genuine emancipation. Under cover of a scientific vocabulary, it became possible, permissible, and even easy, at last to speak freely of subjects which for centuries had been banned. Psychoanalysis, becoming widespread, confronted a large number of puritans with their real minds, and made them more tolerant of the desires of others. A certain freedom and boldness in morals was encouraged by the doctors, who deemed it their duty to free their patients from repression that might bring them to insanity. From about 1928 writers like Joyce and D. H. Lawrence displayed a boldness which was to seem half-hearted to the readers of 1940, but which in its day was something new. Physical shame disappeared at the same time as intellectual and verbal shame. Women shed more and more of their clothing. About 1935 men and women in complete nudity could be seen on numerous American and European beaches. In Germany and the Scandinavian countries the 'nudist' sects multiplied. Toler-

ance of sexual liberties and even sexual abnormalities, became general . .

### *Aberrations and Excesses*

Human morals swing like a pendulum continually passing the middle position. In the beginning the Freudian influence was beneficial. It seemed to be true that excessive austerity was contrary to the moral and bodily health of such human beings as were neither saints nor impotent. It is a fact that from 1930 onwards the number of cases of insanity diminished, both in America and Europe.

But before long, on the ground of respecting the desires of everyone, a point was reached when all social contracts were broken. The ancient institution of marriage was completely destroyed by the coming of divorce by simple declaration, by companionate alliances, and by the refusal to bear children. Strictness of morals, under the rule of the older morality, had lent value and charm to harmless delights. In the nineteenth century, historians show, young men and girls had enjoyed being together for purposes of innocent games, sports, or studies. From 1935 onwards, most gatherings assumed the character of a debauch. Public feeling had changed so completely that in England, formerly so strict a country, anti puritanism became a positive virtue. It was not imposed by law, but custom was sovereign and the social sanctions were merciless. In 1954 the Prime Minister, Mr. Shallow, found himself forced into retirement by public opinion and the Press because he was suspected of conjugal fidelity. It was he who had formerly passed the Act for Compulsory Psychoanalysis in Nursery Schools. He was accused of hypocrisy. More than one Continental newspaper opened a campaign to show that sexual liberty in England was a pretence, and that in actual fact, underneath all the extreme freedom of speech and literature, it cloaked

a large number of chaste lives. It was an unfair accusation; but the fanaticism of the 'emancipated' became ferocious. . . .

*Symptoms of Reaction: 1940-1950.*

About 1940 the graph of cases of insanity rose quite rapidly. To the unprejudiced observer it would have been obvious that this was symptomatic of a check to the new morality. But the 'emancipated', in their blind intolerance, nevertheless made a bid for new audacities. Signs of reaction, however began to show themselves. So far they were slight, but they were unmistakable. In 1942 there appeared anonymously that curious book, 'Confessions of a Child of the New Century', in which the inward confusion of the younger generation, and their craving for sentimental feelings, were set out with a naïve shamefacedness. Its success was enormous, even to the pitch of several writers, emboldened or jealous, trying to exploit the same vein, notwithstanding the danger of legal proceedings being taken against them. In 1943 Miss Brushwood's famous novel, 'Conjugal Happiness', was published, in which, with an audacity that then seemed incredible, she depicted the pleasures of fidelity, normal love, and indissoluble marriage.

The book was banned by the English censorship, but was immediately reprinted in France, and thousands of copies were surreptitiously imported. An international group of writers protested against the Home Office decision and claimed the right to freedom of virtue. The body of the 'emancipated' were furious, in the name of morality. The campaign roused lively curiosity, and the circulation of the book, which was translated into every language of the world, reached immense figures. More than 1,300,000 copies were sold in the United States, 800,000 in Germany, 300,000 of the clandestine edition in England, 70,000 in

France, and 20,000 in Holland. The young people of both sexes seemed to find a pleasure which the classic moralists styled 'unhealthy' in reading these descriptions of forgotten sentiments and modes of living.

The influence of 'Conjugal Happiness' and the new 'classical' school soon became obvious. Small groups, still rather timidly but in increasing numbers, tried to live their lives according to the principles of Miss Brushwood. Aged Americans can still remember the New York and Boston fashion during the winter of 1943-1944 for giving 'conjugal parties', secret of course, to which were invited only married couples who passed the whole evening together without separating. These 'goings-on' caused scandal, but Europe followed suit. In Hyde Park the police were forced to prosecute married couples who came in broad daylight and sat reading verses together on the grass. In Paris the Prefect of Police had to establish a special body of police on motor-bicycles to cleanse the Bois de Boulogne of women wearing the so-called 'virtue' dresses, which, buttoned up to the neck, were shocking respectable passers-by. In one ancient European university a professor of philosophy was expelled for impenitent asceticism. It was becoming manifest that the morality of freedom, though still clung to by the masses, was no longer being respected by the elect. . . .

#### *Schmidtism.*

In 1954 Dr. Schmidt, the Lausanne physician whose name was to become so famous, published his book on the repressions of modesty. Nowadays his doctrines strike us as self-evident, but at that time they came to innumerable readers as a revelation. Dr. Schmidt maintained,

(a) That as man had been a member of organized groups for more than fifteen thousand years, social morality and the constraints imposed thereby had become an



(b) That in thwarting this instinct  
sion to a completely animal life,  
were caused in men, just as painful and  
of desire had been.

(c) That a great many nervous maladies  
by making the sufferer aware of this secret  
by sanctioning his obedience to it.

In support of this theory, Dr. Schmidt  
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At the moment of writing (1992), it is undeniable that the Schmidtian reaction has in its turn been excessive. A new puritanism, more aggressive than the old, threatens to dominate our activities and our thoughts. What Freud or Schmidt, as yet unknown, will rise to free us from this evil spirit?

instinct in him, no less powerful than the sexual instinct or that of self-preservation. (It was the old theory of Trotter.)

(b) That in thwarting this instinct by an artificial reversion to a completely animal life, repressions of modesty were caused in men, just as painful and dangerous as those of desire had been.

(c) That a great many nervous maladies could be cured by making the sufferer aware of this secret modesty and by sanctioning his obedience to it.

In support of this theory, Dr. Schmidt produced numerous psychoanalytic cases which disclosed the existence of repressed social elements.

His doctrine became known as Schmidtism and enjoyed widespread success, especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries, where its scientific vocabulary made permissible the confession of sentiments and scruples which had long been taboo. From 1959 onwards there was an excellent course in Schmidtism at Columbia University. In the following year the Institute of Schmidtian Psychology was inaugurated at Baltimore, and became the nucleus of a body of Schmidtian doctors. In 1960 Dr. Schmidt came in person to America, and was enthusiastically received by students and patients.

The happy effects of Schmidtism were soon manifest. Persons with conjugal, virtuous or normal inclinations no longer felt themselves regarded with hostility, and lost the uncouth manners and haggard appearance which had for some years become familiar to them. Their writings became less violent. The curve showing cases of sexual insanity, which once again had risen in a very alarming manner, began to drop. This period, to which Professor Gilrobin has given the name of 'period of reversal of values', lasted approximately from 1960 to 1975.

At the moment of writing (1902), it is undeniable that the Schmittian reaction has in its turn been extreme. A new puritanism, more extreme than the old, threatens to dominate our sciences and our thought. What kind of a Schmidt, as yet unknown, will rise to free us from this evil spirit?

## X

### CHILDHOOD AND WISDOM

THERE are moments in life when everything seems to point one way towards one knot of ideas. Talking the other day with a friend about Cocteau's novel 'Les Enfants Terribles', he remarked: 'Yes, Cocteau is right: childhood is often a time of tragedy. . . . I have a son of my own, sixteen years old, in whom I can watch the passage from childhood to adolescence. . . . My dear fellow, it is a far cry from what the optimistic novelists describe for us! To certain beings youth means years of sadness and despair, sometimes a dreadful longing for death. . . . It is maturity that brings happiness. . . .' And that evening, reading Walter Lippmann's book, 'A Preface to Morals,' I found in its pages a theory of adolescence and maturity which seemed at once to confirm and explain the remark that had struck me in the morning.

Earliest childhood is a time of magical power. Alain, in his 'Les Idées et les Ages', has shown how the child knows nothing of real obstacles. The sole denizens of the Enchanted Isle in which his helplessness makes him live are godlike forces, a mother or a nurse. If these are favourable to him, all things are possible, and he can make them favourable to him, first by cries and signs (period of omnipotence by magic signs<sup>1</sup>), and later by words and phrases (period of magic incantations). Experience does not teach the small child that things can be conquered by acting or

<sup>1</sup> Dr. S. Ferenczi.

working upon them. During the first fifteen months he is carried towards objects, or else objects are brought to him. His image of the universe holds no resistances other than wills. Through this period we all pass, and to it, no doubt, corresponds the incurable fondness that we harbour for the marvellous. Every mother is a fairy to her child, every father a magician. 'Cook and gardener, door-keeper and neighbour, are sorcerers and witches whose attributes are duly ordered and who are the object of a special cult.' When these divinities have been propitiated by the magic of cries and words, the child reigns over the apparent world.

But once able to move alone, the child is forced to recognize that he is surrounded by unheeding objects and hostile beings of whose existence he has hitherto been ignorant. Cat scratches, dog bites, fire burns, cries and magic words don't work against these sources of pain. Through them the child leaves the enchanted world and enters into contact with the actual world. But it is only very slowly, through twelve or fifteen years, that he sheds his sense of omnipotence. If he is spoiled, brought up nearly alone in a fond family, he remains for a long time shielded from natural laws. Whence comes the necessity for contact with other children, and the formation of character through school. And during the whole progress of the painful apprenticeship to reality, through the fighting and bullying and ragging of schooldays, the sense of magical omnipotence is fighting for its own survival. Cocteau's heroes keep fetishes and amulets in a drawer. All children with lively imaginations set up alongside the religions taught to them a personal mythology and barbarous observances. Most parents know nothing of the primitive cults counting their secret and discreet devotees under their own roofs. George Sand worshipped the goddess Corambé. I myself know a little boy who, before any decision goes to consult 'Mr. Lucky' in a

corner, always the same corner, of an empty room. 'Maturity begins when the adult abandons magical practices and accepts the conditions imposed upon his desires by reality.'

That definition shows how few men actually achieve complete maturity. In most of us the enchanted universe and the real universe remain two countries with shifting frontiers. The story of the slow advance of that frontier is the novelistic theme *par excellence*. A man accepts (or refuses to accept) the existence of an outer world swayed by physical and psychological laws: that is the subject of Stendhal's 'La Chartreuse de Parme', of Balzac's 'Le Lys dans la Vallée', of Goethe's 'Wilhelm Meister', and of every great biography.

In adolescence the period of first love brings a recrudescence of magic. During several years real human beings are once more replaced by divine creatures who can work our weal or woe by a single word. Certain men never mature; that is, they never accept the lessons of experience and continue to believe that the world consists only of their desires. Great wealth, power, or success won without a struggle, all tend to make a man into a child who never grows up.

The symptoms of 'adult childishness' are familiar: the idea that there is a hidden conspiracy of men and things to thwart one's will, a sense that life is one's debtor, that the duty of the universe should be to care for one, the quest for an optimistic philosophy promising a disappearance of evil, just as a mother comforts a hurt child with kisses and assurances that the naughty table will be punished. Even in those of us who have at last admitted the heedlessness of nature and the defensive selfishness of other men; there often survives a childish sadness and a melancholy regret for the illusions of early years. We know that the world in which we live is imperfect, but we imagine it as another, wherein we shall be able to find once more the golden age of our child-

hood. True maturity, true wisdom, are attained only by those who can wholeheartedly say with Marcus Aurelius, 'All that accords with thee, O world, accords with myself,' or with Descartes, 'I have made it my habit to vanquish my desires rather than the order of the world, and to think that what has not happened is, with regard to myself, something totally impossible.'

It will be noticed that here the Wise Man joins hands with the Child. His desires having fallen into harmony with the nature of things, the Wise Man also is living in a universe that conforms with his desires. He can unleash his passions, *not like a child because others will see to their consequences*, but because he is master of the pack and can call them to heel at will. Very few men attain this childhood of wisdom, and the passage from the Enchanted Isle to the 'strange carnival' of actual existence remains the great drama of human life. The most secret tragedies, and perhaps the most poignant, are played out in those school playgrounds where, every day, some ten-year-old Hamlet discovers injustice, envy, malice, outruns them, accepts them, and becomes a man.



## FROM A JOURNAL, 1930

JULY 19TH.—Rented for this summer the house of our friends the S.s, near the entrance to Richmond Park. Before leaving Paris, luncheon with Paul Valéry. He had a bad cold, coughing and shivering, but was in good form, weaving his clean-cut aëry patterns.

‘I admit only two moral rules,’ said Valéry. ‘The first is, not to cause suffering (so far as that is possible, which is not always so); the second is, to try to be a little superior to other animals, and to respect in oneself a fairly lofty idea of mankind. . . . But that too isn’t always possible.’

‘I like your moral system,’ I remarked. . . . ‘For my own part, I feel that man’s great drama lies in his being at once an inferior animal, with the violent instincts of the brute, and a social being in whom the desire for approval and affection has become an instinct no less compelling. Whence the conflicts of which our novels are born.’

‘I don’t think it is quite fair,’ said Valéry, ‘to set up the animal and the social being in opposition. The true conflict does not lie there, for there are social animals, like the ant, which have achieved their balance by a sacrifice of the individual. No, man’s misfortune (and his originality as well) is that he has declined to make the choice. He began by evolving in the same direction as the ant, and then he stopped and said to himself: “This is all very well, but I want to be a great beast of prey as well.” Now, it is hard to be both. In modern man, who has wanted to develop at the same time social organization (the ant) and individual liberty (the beast of prey), there is bound to be a conflict. It is impossible to

stand upright on two legs that are always straddling further apart. So what's to be done? That is the problem of all morality.'

'I don't know,' I said. . . . 'Learn to walk, I suppose. . . . You know Aldous Huxley's metaphor? Man is an acrobat on a tight-rope, moving painfully forward, holding a balancing-pole with the brute instincts at one end of it and the social instincts at the other. . . . There is no rule for making a good tight-rope walker except to put one foot in front of the other and learn to use the pole.'

'Yes,' said Valéry. . . . 'And that amounts to saying that the best type of man is the virtuoso. I have always thought so, in art as in morality.'

JULY 25TH.—The Paris-Calais-Dover journey, in tearing weather. The rain lashed the carriage windows, but I had an excellent book, Malinowski's 'Sexual Life of Savages'. It is a very intelligent study of the natives of the Triobrand Islands in the Malay Archipelago. Came back upon some familiar ideas.

(a) The primitive races, more than any others, respect the conventions and ceremonies. This confirms what Valéry was maintaining the other day. Man began like the ant. The Triobranders are social animals. They observe the utmost decency in language. For excrement and for the acts of love-making they have both a polite word and a crude word, and it is always the polite word that they use in public. Their taboo subjects of conversation are more numerous than those in England. It is an insult to talk to a husband of his wife's beauty. This code of the proprieties is of course different from ours, but it gives the same results, that is to say, it upholds order and makes life possible. The convention is valuable *qua* convention, not by its absolute value. (That is what I tried to show in 'The Myth of Myths'.) For instance,

unmarried girls in the Triobrand Islands can have lovers, and in this case they cease to sleep in their parents' houses, although continuing to have their meals there. Every village has its *bukumatula*, a collective house for the unmarried, where the unwed couples sleep together. The missionaries are shocked by this promiscuity. As a matter of fact, it is made 'decent' by a general code of strict rules. No couple ever allows itself to watch the love-play of another pair; the liaisons are lasting and affectionate. In short, the *bukumatula* is a club for bachelors, the regulations of which are strict, but to which members can bring their betrothed. In some villages the missionaries have managed to suppress it; the results have been bad. The old convention is of greater value than any new convention, which long remains verbal.

(b) The family régime of the Triobranders is matriarchal. It rests upon a simple idea which seems to us extraordinary: these savages do not believe that the father plays any part in the procreation of a child. Their theory is that a spirit comes during the night and strikes on the woman's head. Her blood is thus driven inwards and so forms the child. The missionaries make great efforts to teach the natives our ideas about generation, as it is hard to bring the Christian religion to tribes to whom the notion of the Father and Son is unintelligible and the idea of a Virgin Mother perfectly ordinary. The missionaries have failed. Malinowski himself, who speaks the language of these islands, has seen the savages burst out laughing when he tried to explain the phenomena of conception according to our view. Their arguments are curious, because they show how the process of reasoning can serve to prove the most absurd thesis with apparent completeness. 'How could the child come from lying together?' they say. . . . 'Look at Tilapo'i there, the ugliest woman in the tribe. No man would want to be her lover. But she has children. Look at the albino women, who

are repellent and impure; but they have children. On the other hand, our young girls make love in the *bukumatula* and never have children.'

The consequences of such ideas are remarkable. As the father does not procreate, he is only the friend of his children, and they themselves are the relatives of their mother and the maternal clan. Incest between brother and sister is much more grave than between father and daughter. A girl may act or talk with full freedom before her father, but not before her brother. Also, when there are festivities or canoe expeditions, care is taken not to invite a brother and sister at the same time, for they are embarrassed at being together. If a child dies, the mother and the maternal clan, having lost a piece of their own flesh, affect a stoical indifference, but the father and his clan, for politeness' sake, heap ashes on their heads and wail dismally.

It would be amusing to write a 'Sexual Life of the Natives of the British Isles', supposedly written by a native of the Malay Archipelago. The author would describe all the amorous customs of the Tea-Drinkers. He would regard them as crazy, would not understand why London possesses no *bukumatula*, nor why men accuse their wives of infidelity if a child is born in their absence, nor why Europeans like children to resemble their fathers. But he would come to the conclusion, if he were sensible, that these conventions, for all their absurdity, produce good results, and that forms of decency are found amongst the Tea-Drinkers which are almost comparable to those of the Pacific civilizations.

AUGUST 1ST—Richmond Park. Squalls shot through with bursts of sunshine. 'Further outlook unsettled,' says *The Times* . . . The crazy English climate. . . . It is impossible to foretell one hour ahead whether we're to have storm or heat-wave. Whence (as Taine would rather

ingenuously have said) the Englishman's horror of engagements long in advance. But no matter, we like our house here. To reach it, you come across Richmond Park. Herds of does and stags browse freely over the wide grassy expanses, broken here and there with solitary oaks. The does stop in a friendly way, one foot upraised a few steps from the car. In front of our windows is Ham Common, a lingering relic of collective ownership, a waste of furze and blackberries and bracken, a piece of wildness preserved, the refinement of an æsthetic race, a contrast which serves deftly to enhance the civilized charm of the Park itself.

AUGUST 2ND-6TH.—Rain. Reading. Annotating with great interest a difficult book, Gerald Heard's 'The Ascent of Humanity'. It is a history of civilization. If I arranged my library, as Charles Du Bos does, by spiritual affinities, I should place Heard between Auguste Comte and Spengler. Let me try to analyse this book, interpolating the reflections he has aroused.

A mind strongly obsessed with an idea tends to identify it everywhere. Here I once more find the Beast of Prey-cum-Ant idea. Heard sees man starting off with an attempt at an ant-heap. The primitive tribe, the herd, is a group in which collective life is the essential, where the individual as such hardly exists.

It is quite likely that in the beginning the individual units in the human pack are interchangeable. Every man can be the leader for a time, rather as in flocks of wild geese or herds of sheep, amongst which any one bird or animal leads the way and is then replaced by another. Primitive men instinctively react as the group does. A decision is taken, not after a debate of the parliamentary type, but because all the members of the group feel that it is demanded by the collective mind. (The 'antennæ' of a politician like Briand,

a primitive man in his kind, might be a survival of this collective sense. He thinks *with*, not *against*, the Chamber.)

The first conscious individuals to emerge from the group are the magic-men. The classic type of the priest-king. Then comes the hero. The hero is the priest-king, who decides to do something original, something that will go beyond the group conventions. Every civilization passes through an heroic age, a time of glorious deeds performed by individual men. It is then that, in art, the recital of heroic exploits (epics and tragedies) supplant the collective magic of the ritual dance. Note that epic poems are always composed by singers or the hero. Later on, in the periods of introspective individualism that follow the heroic age, comes the day of autobiography, the self-written epic of inglorious life. *For the descendants of the hero are quick to discover the vanity of the life of action.* The conqueror scores the earth with furrows that are instantly obliterated by time. The heroic age is succeeded by the contemplative age. And that is when religion (no longer the magical religion of the tribe, but the individual religion of the man seeking his own salvation) comes to the forefront of human thought. Every stable period in human societies is marked at its close by the fondness of the masses for democracy and by mysticism amongst the elect.

The priest (the guardian of magical rites) is not a danger to society, indeed, he preserves it by imposing upon it collective ceremonial. The danger comes when someone other than the priest, the *paganus*, the pagan, becomes religious. Then Reformation and Revolution are drawing near. The individual, unable to find happiness in its heroic form of action, begins to seek it under some imaginary or supernatural guise. In seventh-century Greece, the Dionysian or Orphic mysteries are orgies working for the appeasement of the individual in a way comparable to that action of

a stupefying drug. A future life is an opiate. Belief in the immortality of the soul, Heard argues, is spiritual egotism.

Concern for salvation in another world is always a sign of individualism. Inasmuch as man identifies himself with society, he is interested in its duration, and his own death strikes him as a matter of no importance. He shows hardly any anxiety about survival. The religious revolution is marked by the concern for personal salvation, as also by the conflict (in Semitic societies a violent one) between prophet and priest. The priest is social, the prophet revolutionary. Aware of a clash between himself and society, the individual fails to understand that his uneasiness springs from an inner change. He believes that some day soon everything will be transformed, whether by the advent of a Messiah or by a political upheaval, and that man will once more find his primitive Eden. The Jew did not yield too readily to the notion of a future life; his Sheol remains rather vague. But not having built his paradise in the heavens, he could not resist the craving to destroy his hell on earth, and from this sprang the Apocalypse, the earliest form of the revolutionary ideal.

The Roman Empire tried to save the State by the tolerance of all religions. The same thing will be done later by the British Empire and the French Republic in their colonies: individuals may freely concern themselves with their own salvation, provided that they leave temporal policy entirely to the central government. After the fall of the Cæsars, Catholicism brought forward a remedy of the same class, a blend of the Jewish and the Roman solutions—the monastery. In Catholicism the average man can find his metaphysical anguish healthily soothed by the intangibility of dogma. The individual who is excessively conscious of his self, and might thus be dangerous to Church and State, must withdraw into a monastic house. A monastery is a place

where a certain number of men escape from social life and concern themselves with their personal salvation; it is a collective egotism which, by being collective, becomes constructive again.

The Renaissance, on the other hand, is the triumph of the individual over the collective body. It is the time of monstrosities—Caesar Borgia, Henry VIII, Elizabeth, the Emperor Frederick II. Caesar Borgia is amoral, that is to say anti-social; he is the beast of prey. The morality of the human beast of prey has been defined in Machiavelli's 'Prince'. But there is an ingenuous element in Machiavelli's cynicism, for he makes no allowance for man's inheritance as a herd animal. A Borgia society cannot last. The beast of prey is very quickly devoured by the race of ants. What is more, he devours himself. The greatness of Shakespeare lies in the fact that, in the full tide of the Renaissance, he expressed that anguish of the individual unable to find happiness in self-centred action. Whence Hamlet, and Macbeth. Romanticism is always the remorse of the beast of prey (Byron).

Reaction was bound to come. After a period of classical stabilization in forms (the seventeenth century), there was the renaissance of sensibility (the eighteenth century). The day of monstrosities was over. Torture, which had seemed so natural, was suppressed. These changes were not ordained by reason, so dear to the sons of the eighteenth century. Hume remarked that it was not contrary to reason for a man to prefer the destruction of the world to the scratching of his own finger. It is the primitive instinct of social sympathy which has been wounded and is reviving. 'The age of humanism becomes the age of humanitarianism.'

About 1789 man cherished hopes of salvation through political revolution, just as a few centuries earlier he hoped to save himself by religious revolution. The nineteenth cen-



tury was essentially revolutionary. The age of heroes had succeeded that of the herd when a few men became fully aware of their individual desires. The second revolutionary age began when a large number of men had the same feeling. But the political revolution (1789-1830) did not succeed in establishing a balance. The individual was unable to find salvation through politics, and seeks it in an economic Apocalypse. After the abortive sketch-plan of 1848 came the Russian Revolution, the most recent episode in the history of civilization. It will fail, in Heard's view, as the revolutions preceding it have failed, if it overlooks the chief factor in the problem. It will succeed if it contrives to rebuild for a time a consciousness of the *homogeneous* group, and not a class-consciousness, which leaves a large number of individuals unsatisfied.

Modern societies, composed of men who are too much egotists, are threatened with death because they are loose individual particles. But the enormous economic systems which support them demand a man's devotion to society. If our civilization is to endure, the individual must be outstripped. Is that possible? Are we to fear that human history must for ever sway between the neurasthenic beast of prey and the hardly conscious ant? Heard does not think so. He hopes that an objective and scientific generation will be able to bring forth, after the pre-individual (that of the primitive tribes) and the individual (of the Renaissance), the super-individual—the man who will realize that an intense individual life is only possible inside a perfectly organized society.

This super-individual would be the conscious ant; he will be freed from anti-social individual desires because he has gauged their emptiness, and although he respects the herd conventions, he will be freed from these also because he will respect them *qua* conventions. Is this too optimistic a con-

clusion? That supreme revolution could only be effected within man's own nature. Is it really possible? Perhaps. (After all, Valéry, Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley, Walter Lippmann, are drafts of the super-individual.) But even if it did succeed, it would only produce a state of unstable equilibrium. A great classical epoch would begin, to last for fifty or a hundred years. Then humanity would once again start off on its clumsy see-saw advance. A good thing. Equilibrium would mean death.

AUGUST 7TH.—*Richmond Park.*

*J'ai vu ce ciel où germent les idées,  
Où les échos chuchotent la future nuit,  
Ainsi profonds, ceux qui sont, et les  
Où sont nés les dieux d'un peuple fort . . .*

This morning *The Times* expert is still talking of cyclones coming from the Atlantic, low pressure ridges over Ireland, and rain. But there is a cloudless blue sky.

Signs of a fine day in the Park here. A faint haze lies over the stretches of grass and the trees, already bathed in sunlight; it is like a young girl's brooding, the expectancy of love. Then, through the luminous mist, come into sight the ponds, the bracken and, higher up, the moist crowns of the beech-trees. Birds are singing, the sky gleams almost white on the horizon, bright blue overhead, and the deer lie hidden in the grass, its burnt hue merging with the colour of their skins. Only their heads, the antlers of the stags, stand out above the waving blades of grass. In the bracken there—two moist eyes, or two dewdrops?

AUGUST 8TH.—Amongst the books in the library here there is one which is becoming popular with us. Its title is 'Children's Questions':

'Daddy, what is the universe?'

And Daddy, according to the book, should answer: 'The universe is everything.'

'Daddy, what is sugar made of?'—*Answer*: 'Put a lump of sugar in the fire and watch it. It melts, gives off gases, and is transformed into a little ash. That ash is carbon.'

'Daddy, what is carbon?'—*Answer*: 'Carbon is carbon.'

And now, every morning, the children come down to breakfast and ask me: 'Daddy, what is carbon?' And I answer: 'Carbon is carbon.' In twenty years, I dare say, a new edition will have to be prepared, in which the father will answer: 'Carbon is a particular combination of the elements of the atom of hydrogen.'

'Daddy,' the children of 1950 will say, 'what is hydrogen?'

'Hydrogen is hydrogen.'

*Per sacula sæculorum.*

AUGUST 9TH.—Work.

I have promised to write an introduction to 'The Portrait of Zélide', by Geoffrey Scott, which Philippe Neel is translating. To help me, Mrs. Leplat-Scott has sent me her brother's other book, 'The Architecture of Humanism' (Scott was an architect as well as a writer). I am very fond of these books by technical experts. This is a brilliant defence of Renaissance architecture, and of the Baroque in particular.

Scott is eminently a classicist, but he deals well with romanticism. He views it as a development of the sensibility in the direction of whatever is far-off. Far-off in past time (the taste for the Middle Ages), far-off in space (the eighteenth-century taste for *chinoiseries*, or for the exotic, as with Chateaubriand or Bernardin de Saint-Pierre). Why does romanticism make for the far distances? Because it expresses of the discontent of the individual, and the discontented always seek to thrust their unsatisfied desires into an imaginary past or into unknown lands. Being a projection

of desire, romanticism is vague, and it likewise fails in philosophy in the sciences, and more particularly in architecture. It is not plastic, it is poetical and, if need be, musical. In poetry and music it produces great works. The reason is obvious enough: it is upheld therein by form. A great romantic poet like Byron imposes the most highly rhythmic and ordered forms upon his thoughts. The wildness of the ideas is saved, as in Victor Hugo, by the classicism of the work itself. In architecture, on the other hand, there are *only* forms. Architectural romanticism confuses them, and nothing is left.

Second idea: the romantic is attracted by nature, always because he is discontented with society. Nature is another form of remoteness. It is viewed as a refuge. The age of sentimentalism and Rousseau's 'natural man' is likewise that which attacks the French style in gardens. The garden was half-way between architecture and nature. They wanted to make something 'purely natural' of it, which was impossible: only the virgin forest is 'natural'. Geoffrey Scott quotes the recipe for a garden in the so-called English style, given by a French nobleman of the eighteenth century, 'Make the gardener drunk, and then follow in his footsteps.' These so-called natural gardens, in fact, were so only in a symbolic manner. The park of the Petit Trianon and that of Bagatelle were well furnished with grottoes, woods and waterfalls, but these ornaments were grouped in the most conventional arrangement. No handiwork of man can be nature. In architecture the efforts of the romantics to be natural produced the fake ruin, or the house swathed in ivy or Virginia creeper concealing its lines. Scott speaks with indignation of Trinity Chapel at Cambridge, shown to visitors as an object of admiration *because of* the plants covering it, the fact being overlooked that underneath these creepers is one of the most graceful monuments of any age.

‘There is a beauty of art and a beauty of Nature. Construction, when it relaxes the principles of design, does not become Nature; it becomes, more probably, slovenly art. Nature, for a living art, is full of suggestion; but it is none the less a resisting force—something to be conquered, modified, adored. It is only when the force of art is spent, when its attempt is rounded and complete, that Nature, freed from the conflict, stands apart, a separate ideal. It is thus the last sign of an artificial civilization when Nature takes the place of art.’

Against that may be set the fact that order, unaccompanied, is entirely powerless to create beauty. Some of the most dreadful wall-papers, some of the duller academic buildings, have order in perfection. Order brings intelligibility and helps our thinking. But easy comprehension of an ugliness does not make that ugliness any pleasanter. True classicism is not order in nature, but nature ruled by mind . . . *Homo additus naturæ*.

One last, and essential, point: in Scott’s opinion, with which I think we must agree, romanticism is an enduring force, and necessary to the spirit. It is a protest of the individual against devitalized conventions, and its strength will later help the same individual to refashion live conventions. The history of the arts has its eternal rhythm: classicism—fake classicism—romanticism—fake romanticism—classicism . . . *per sæcula sæculorum*.

AUGUST 11TH.—The Assembly of Bishops of the Church of England at Lambeth. Several features strike me:

(a) The extent of the territories represented. This assembly is an œcumenical council presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish Bishops are joined by the American Bishops (who have picturesque titles—the Bishop of Eau-Claire, the Bishop of

Fond du Lac, the Bishop of the Panama Canal Zone), and also by Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Indian, Japanese and Chinese Bishops, and by a few isolated ones like the Bishop of Corea, the Bishop of the Upper Nile, and the Bishop of Zanzibar. Proposals of union have even been made to Churches with slightly differing creeds. The Orthodox Churches have sent a representative, the Patriarch of Alexandria, to the Conference; the Archbishop of Utrecht heads a delegation of Old Catholics. An attempt to create another Universal Church alongside of Rome. But Rome has the advantage of single dogma.

(b) The Imperial tendency. Just as the British Empire tends to form, alongside of Europe, a federation of free states with the person of the King as its sole and fragile link, so the Church of England seems to be trying to set up, beside the Catholic Church, a federation of autonomous national churches. It would gladly grant them, as it were, 'dominion status,' provided that by attending such Conferences under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, they recognize both the unity of the Church and (though this would never be avowed) that of an Anglo-Saxon Empire. To maintain the Empire, His Majesty's Government does not hesitate to grant the Dominions wider and wider measures of freedom, even to the right of secession. The Church of England, on its side, is prepared to grant the local Churches the most astonishing rights of modification. At Lambeth, for instance, the Churches of Southern India have been authorized to set up a single Christian Church, uniting with non-episcopal bodies like the Presbyterians and Wesleyans. In religion as in politics, Britannic flexibility contrasts with Roman intransigence.

(c) The Bishops assembled at Lambeth have devoted a great part of their debates to sexual questions. This may be surprising, but I think that they are right: the maintenance

of sexual discipline is one of the most important tasks of any Church. Without such discipline humanity moves speedily through orgy to self-destruction. 'Among the tasks that confront the Church to-day,' say the English Bishops, 'none is more noble or more urgent than that of rescuing the whole subject of sex from degradation in thought and conversation. . . . We believe that the way to do this can be summed up in one word: education. . . . If the children also become from the first to connect sex instincts with the lives. . . .'

-f God, they will not only themselves

reasons which, in our case, would make it blameworthy to produce a new life?' If they reach the conclusion that it would be unmistakably a fault, and if the couple has good reasons for not being able to resort to abstinence, then the Bishops say that they cannot condemn the use of scientific methods of preventing conception. It is plain that a Protestant doctrine of personal judgment is set up against the rigid Catholic teaching, more rigid than ever since the Papal Encyclical of January, 1931. (This resolution was carried by 193 votes to 67.)

The following resolution was added: 'Sexual intercourse between persons who are not legally married is a grievous sin. The use of contraceptives does not remove the sin.' Obviously.

(d) The Conference was much concerned with new scientific teachings and their defensive value to religion. 'There is much in the scientific and philosophical thinking of our time which provides a climate more favourable to faith in God than has existed for generations. New interpretations of the cosmic process are now before us which are congruous with Christian Theism. The great scientific movement of the nineteenth century had the appearance, at least, of hostility to religion. But now, from within that movement and under its impulse, views of the universal process are being formed which point to a spiritual interpretation. We are now able, by the help of the various departmental sciences, to trace in outline a continuous process of creative development in which at every stage we can find the Divine presence and power.'

The Bishops here purpose to make use of scientists like Eddington or Whitehead for a new system of apologetics. I find this a surprising attitude. If the Churches really hold the truth of the prophets and apostles, of Moses and St. Paul, why should they need Eddington? The truth is that



the modern scientist, unlike certain of his nineteenth-century predecessors, does not claim to explain the world, and freely admits that he will never explain it. It is also true that he recognizes that the spiritual cannot be reduced to terms of physico-chemical mechanism. (Mr. Haldane was quite clear about that at Oxford the other day. But other scientists might perhaps be of a different opinion . . . Langevin, Painlevé?). But it is inaccurate to say that confirmation of the Biblical stories is found in modern science. The word 'God' is used to-day in different senses. As Walter Lippmann observes, the God of the deist physicists is not the God of the Bible; he plays a useful part in the vocabulary of the agnostic but cannot satisfy the passions of a believer. He does not rule the world like a King, nor watch over his children like a Father. He is no longer a *person* concerned with the affairs of this world. From the religious point of view he is no longer God at all.

It is permissible to ask whether a well-constructed language would employ one single word to designate ideas so different. Certainly many modernist and religious minds no longer believe, as Lippmann remarks, in the God of Genesis who walked in the cool of the evening in the Garden of Eden, and called Adam and his wife; nor in the God of Exodus who appeared unto Moses and Aaron and to seventy of the Elders of Israel. To say that modern science allows one to believe in the literal truth of the Bible because the relativity of Einstein justifies both Galileo and the Inquisition, is not perhaps a very honest way of thinking.

To which Lippmann doubtless replies that, all the same, it is better to retain the word 'God', although it may mean one thing to the mass of the faithful and something else to a minority of scientists and philosophers, because the semblance of a certain community of sentiments is thus preserved. For, as he remarks, it is not merely expedient, it may also be

wise to wish that men should not be too deeply divided by intellectual distinctions. This thesis can be upheld in good faith. Most words in our vocabulary represent a zone of 'suggestion' rather than a clearly defined object.

To-morrow we are to have a visit from an English scientist, Professor N, one of the best pupils of Rutherford and J. J. Thompson, and the author of a fine book on the mechanism of the universe. I shall talk to him about the Assembly of Bishops.

AUGUST 16TH — 'The image I form of the world after reading you,' I said to the Professor, 'is of a vast concert of vibrations. They are there in all sizes, from the minutest waves of *gamma* rays, or cosmic rays, to the huge waves of wireless. Quite a simple mechanism and not without beauty. But what the devil is the use of it all? Why should a world of vibration have been created?'

'Possibly,' he said, 'because it was easier than creating a motionless world. Oscillation is the mark of souls and bodies that have not found their equilibrium.'

'You remind me,' I remarked, 'of Madame de Charrière explaining to Benjamin Constant that God did exist, but that he died during the creation of the world. "And so the universe which you behold," she said, "is only the scaffolding of a universe that will never be built."'

Whereupon he spoke about the Englishman's religion, and quoted this definition: 'One-quarter, lofty spirituality, one-quarter, base materialism, one-half, a sentiment like nothing else and defying all analysis.'

'In any case,' I said, 'it is a very powerful sentiment amongst you, for hardly any English scientist can write a technical book without rounding it off with theology.'

'True,' he said, 'but I confess that from a religious point of view that strikes me as weak. Why should one want

religion to be scientifically true? There are several kinds of truth. When a mystic tells me that he has had the experience of meeting with God, what can I reply? He is right, just as much as the biologist who has seen a spermatozoon and an ovule under his microscope.'

'I don't think it is quite the same thing. . . . The biologist can repeat his experiment, and it can also be repeated elsewhere by myself. The mystic's experience is unique. . . . The system of nature, as framed by science, is singular in its solidarity. I feel that the best argument for religion should be precisely the fixity of laws in nature, for the loyalty of the universe is something really surprising. . . . It is really the greatest miracle of all. Admit the disloyalty of the universe to its own laws and science becomes a sheer impossibility. Suddenly the sun's rays would reach us zig-zag, and when I take away my hand the plate would soar gently into the air.'

'Do you really believe in the loyalty of the universe?' said the Professor. 'Scientific laws exist because men make them. Mankind has abstractly isolated certain systems in the confusion of nature and found an order in them. Whence he has long concluded that a universal order exists. But the most important facts escape the grasp of science. Are there any laws of love, or even of rain and fine weather?'

'There are not,' I said. 'But a determinist like Berthelot or Bertrand Russell would reply that we are still imperfectly acquainted with the details of the mechanism, and that everything goes to show that by a perfect mind these laws could be discovered.'

'I don't think so,' he said. 'Nothing seems to me to prove that a scientific psychology, or even a scientific meteorology, could ever be pieced together. . . . No: for my own part, I believe that the universe is crazy—with pockets of sanity.'

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*Same evening* — 'We all succumb,' says Alain, 'to that passion for conjecture instead of exact observation. But what are the odds in favour of our petty reasoning coinciding constantly with that great dice which the universe is flinging against us? Politicians never cease their prophesying, and one of the most powerful passions hidden in every one of us makes us admire and enjoy the realization of a prophecy. An eclipse can be foretold to within a second or two, but that need not turn our heads when we cannot foretell two hours ahead whether or not there will be clouds. And in politics and finance the prophets are still more ludicrous . . . Our status as men does not admit of any such security, even in the field of misfortune, events are more like the waves of the sea, and the able pilot steers as the wave comes.'

True, very true. But the able pilot keeps himself informed by wireless regarding the movements of cyclones, and shifts his course to avoid them. Fog is hard to foresee, but we shall soon have instruments which will make collisions almost impossible. The advance of economic cyclones can be noted, as ocean storms can. Some day a bankers' weather bureau will have to be set up. The pilot knows that he cannot alter the wave and he steers accordingly, but he also knows that he is sailing to Havre and is certain of reaching there.

'But some vessels sink.'

'I know. But is that any reason for not steering?'

AUGUST 21ST — To-day attended a session of the K. Police Court. A tribunal of this kind differs from the French equivalent in that the judges are not paid officials, but local notabilities appointed by the Lord Chancellor on the recommendation of the Lord Lieutenant of the county. Formerly, magistrates were nearly all of the squire class. On the Bench to-day were an elderly General, a Colonel, the local Labour

M.P., and four other magistrates about whom I know nothing.

A bare room. At one side the raised bench of the magistrates, and beneath them the clerk of the court, his shorthand writers, and numerous policemen. In the centre a table round which were seated the lawyers. On the other side a fair sprinkling of the public on benches. It is odd to see for the first time policemen without their helmets. Hitherto they had held in my eyes the unreal, abstract character of mediæval knights or the wax figures at Madame Tussaud's. Here one feels them to be at home; the armour softens; they are smiling men, with white or fair hair. It is like suddenly being present at a session of the tribunal of Saint Louis. He too was certainly surrounded by men of flesh and blood, like other men. To the traveller no less than to the historian the problem is one of detecting humanity beneath the legendary.

The clerk of the court calls the first case. The paper in front of me defines it in these terms:

*Metropolitan Police v. Waddell*

*Charge:* Driving a motor-car in a manner dangerous to public safety.

*Maximum Fine:* £20.

Waddell is standing on the small wooden platform reserved for accused persons. A common fellow; collar with rounded points; grey flannel shirt; jacket too square at the shoulders.

The prosecution, represented by a young man in black, stands at the lawyers' table and gives an account of the case. Last Sunday, on a certain wide and excellent road in the neighbourhood, three cars were following each other. In the first was Mr. D., an officer of the Coldstream Guards (his name was that of one of the great English political families); in the second was a friend of his, Mr. P., an engineer; in the third was the accused. Lieutenant D., and P., in their more

powerful cars, had just overtaken the accused, and were slowing up on account of a bunch of cyclists who were taking up the right-hand side of the road. At that moment the accused took advantage of their slowing up to pass them himself, thus pulling out the third abreast on the road—the cyclists, one car, and the accused.

As a car was approaching in the other direction, Waddell had abruptly to fall back into line, forcing D. and P. to brake hard in order to avoid a collision. Lieutenant D. was furious and gave chase to the accused, caught him up and signalled to him to stop. The accused did not stop. The chase continued at seventy miles an hour. At last, in a favourable place, D. put himself across the roadway, forced Waddell to get out of his car and asked for his name. 'Give me yours' he replied. D. refused, and summoned a policeman who happened to be near, reporting the accused for dangerous driving.

During this statement I watched the magistrates' Bench and tried to divine their thoughts. Most of them were gentlemen, two of them retired officers. Class solidarity ought to have tempted them to uphold a Guards officer. On the other hand the question of road courtesy is one that is frequently discussed in England, and therein as elsewhere, the English like the rules of the game to be observed. All of which seemed to me to tell against Waddell. Moreover the man seemed violent and irritable; one could easily imagine him driving brutally.

A stout pink-faced policeman opened the door of the witnesses' room and called: 'Mr. Joseph D.' Enter a fair handsome young man of the true Eton-Oxford type (though it would probably be Sandhurst), with a grey flannel suit and a red tie. He stepped on to the stand matching that of the accused, and took the oath, Bible in hand 'I swear by Almighty God . . .' The prosecuting lawyer then ques-

tioned him with obvious kindness and made him repeat the story as above. D. spoke in a very low, measured voice, adding a few supplementary details: 'The accused,' he said, 'was driving an American car.' A stir amongst the magistrates and public showed that this was an aggravating circumstance. The accused had had a lady with him, and when at last confronted by D. he had said: 'If it weren't for the lady here, I'd smash your face in!' The young black-coated lawyer put one last question to the lieutenant: 'And you took all this trouble, didn't you, Mr. D., in a purely disinterested way, to help in maintaining good order on the road?'—'Yes'—the word came in that same flat, toneless voice.—'Thank you,' said the lawyer, sitting down.

At this moment a small man in a blue coat, with a hard intelligent face, rises at the central table. This is Waddell's defender: a typical provincial lawyer, possibly a friend of the accused, having come from a distance to help him. The trenchant tone of his first words alters the atmosphere of the proceedings, and something revolutionary is infused into the commonplace business. It is no longer man against man, but class against class. To the little man in the blue suit this absurd case has arisen only from the resentment of two 'gentlemen' (the word is frowned upon by English writers, but survives in popular usage) at seeing themselves overtaken by a mere tradesman. 'But the road is everybody's, isn't it?' A commonplace line, but this man has a fluent and cutting tongue.

'Lieutenant D.,' he asked, 'was it in the spirit of a Crusader that you set off on your drive last Sunday?'

'I don't understand the question.'

'But it is perfectly clear. Do you regard yourself as bound to redress the wrongs of the Infidels of the highway?'

'No.'

'Don't you know that there are roid police who do their duty properly and don't need any help from you?'

'No policeman saw this particular incident'

'Lieutenant D, what speed were you going at the moment of this particular incident?'

'About forty miles an hour'

'Don't you regard that as a dangerous speed?'

'No'

Here the chairman of the Bench intervened obviously annoyed 'What does it matter what speed the witness was going at? Your client was going still faster, because he overtook him'

'I beg your pardon Lieutenant D is driving about the roads in a crusading spirit, eager to preach the Gospel amongst car-drivers Am I not entitled to prove that this paladin is himself a dangerous driver? Lieutenant D have you ever been convicted of driving at excessive speeds?'

'Yes'

Obvious surprise of the magistrates

'Recently?' asks the little lawyer sharply

'No'

'You say 'No', Lieutenant D? Were you convicted of driving at an excessive speed last year?'

'Yes'

'And you don't call that recently? Do they teach you evasions in the Coldstream Guards?'

A murmur of annoyance on the Bench To attack an old and honoured regiment in defence of a common driver seems to these old gentlemen in the worst possible taste A very clumsy lawyer He will get his client convicted But he persists

'Lieutenant D, your car is a very fast sports coupé, isn't it?'

'It is a very fast coupé, but not a sports coupé'



Clearly the lawyer wishes by the word 'sports' to suggest an idea of speed and elegance, in contrast to his client's decent, slow, ordinary, family car. The latter stands absolutely impassive in the box.

'What gave you most pleasure in this man-hunt, Lieutenant D.? The hunt itself or the denunciation?'

'It wasn't a hunt.'

'Chasing a man at seventy miles an hour—is not that a hunt?'

'No.'

'The truth is this—is it not, Lieutenant D.?—that you were annoyed at finding yourself, you, an officer of the Guards, and a sportsman (I beg your pardon! I forgot you had objections to the word "sport" . . .) outstripped by a modest British citizen, and that you wanted to have your own back? When you spoke to him, you were excited and arrogant, were you not?'

'No.'

'If the defendant refused to give you his name, did not you equally refuse to give him yours?'

'I should have given him mine if he'd given his. It was for him to start.'

'Really? And why so, Lieutenant D.? Do you think that traffic should be held up because an officer of the Coldstream Guards wonders whether he should give his name first or second?'

I admire D.'s calm under this rain of ironic questions. The little man in the blue suit is standing with one foot on his chair, elbow on knee, chin in hand. He would have been a remarkable member of the Revolutionary Convention, but I still feel that he is doing his client harm. At last D.'s ordeal is over, and with a smile he crosses to a seat on the public benches. The policeman calls: 'Mr. P.' This is the Lieutenant's motoring friend: the same Public School type.

The barrister will be able to continue his sarcasm. But P., a very adroit witness, does not let himself be pulled to pieces. 'Yes. . . . No. . . . I don't share that view. . . .' The magistrates follow the match with evident favour towards the witness, although letting no trace of their feelings become visible.

'Your friend had a very fast car, Mr. P.?'

'No . . . a fast car.'

'A sports coupé?'

'No . . . a coupé.'

'Why won't you admit it is a sports coupé?'

'Because it was not a sports coupé.'

'You say, Mr. P., that my client had an American car?'

'Yes.'

'Mr. D. told us the same thing.'

'I don't know.'

'You don't know? Have you never discussed this affair with Lieutenant D?'

'Oh, yes, often. The last time was five minutes ago.'

'So these two gentlemen came to the Court together and have decided that my client's car was an American car. . . . What would you say, Mr. P., if I informed you that it is a French car? Would you take that from me as a fact?'

'Yes.'

I observe that the fact of having driven a French car, and not an American one, strikes the magistrates, witnesses and defendant as an extenuating circumstance. The blue advocate, seeing that nothing can be got out of P., thereupon lets him go.

One more witness: the policeman who brought the summons at D.'s request. An elderly man, twirling his helmet in his hands and rather embarrassed. He too will have a taste of the defending lawyer's irony.

'Tell me, officer, when Lieutenant D. came up to you, and the

he tell you that he had just been chasing this man at seventy miles an hour?’

‘He did, sir.’

‘And you did not summon him for exceeding the speed limit? Really, officer, you lost a fine chance there!’

With this the hearing of witnesses was closed. ‘That is my case,’ ended the black advocate. ‘That is my case,’ replied the blue; and the defendant crossed the room and entered the witness-box. Bible in hand, he repeated the formula of the oath, and then his counsel began examining him.

One cannot help being struck by the self-control shown by this man of the people. It is his turn now to attract sympathy. The lawyer gives leading questions:

‘Did you do anything at all to rouse the anger of this young Guards officer?’

‘Nothing at all.’

‘How did he look when he caught you up?’

‘He was white with rage.’

‘Was your car an American one?’

(Certainly this would appear to be the kernel of the case.)

‘No, French.’

‘How long have you been driving cars?’

‘Twenty years.’

‘Have you ever had an accident?’

‘Never.’

The prosecution then take their turn with the witness. Counsel tries to make him admit that by pulling out beyond both the cyclists and one other car, he must have gone over the middle of the roadway, which is forbidden. But he resists.

‘I had all the room I needed. Four feet for the cyclists, four feet for Mr. D.’s car, and four for my own. I didn’t go over the crown of the road.’

Lieutenant listened to this cross-examination wondering with some

embarrassment what I would do if I were on the Bench. The evidence is contradictory. There are no solid proofs. I should be for acquittal. But I thought that Waddell would be found guilty because the magistrates had been irritated by his counsel.

The Court retired. Both of the lawyers, and the policemen, engaged in friendly conversation, and after five minutes' deliberation the Court returned. Waddell is acquitted! The blue counsel is triumphant. In spite of my feeling of sympathy towards D., I am satisfied, because, given the evidence, this was the just solution.

Later, in conversation with the magistrates, I was interested to learn the grounds for their judgment. It had been a curious deliberation. The two retired officers, annoyed by the little lawyer, had insisted on *acquittal* because they mistrusted their own passions and were afraid of being prejudiced. The Labour M.P., on the other hand, had shown himself in favour of a small penalty, for the same reason. Complex reactions: but they showed me two things—firstly, why parliamentary government has so long been practicable in England; and secondly, how easy it would be to deceive through excess of honesty.

Second case. . . . But the second case was of the kind which in France are tried *in camera*. It was extremely curious. . . .

AUGUST 23RD.—Finished re-reading Eckermann in the new translation. I should like to try to define more exactly the causes of that resistance which I often feel in men whom I esteem, when they are faced by the wisdom of Goethe.

(a) Goethe displeases the faithful because he is at heart an agnostic. I know that he speaks of God with respect, much as he speaks of the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar and the

King of Bavaria, though with less affection. But he has a strong dislike of all metaphysics. 'Man is not born to solve the problem of the universe, but to seek whither that problem leads, and then to take his stand within the limits of the intelligible. . . .' And again: 'I should not like to be deprived of the joy of believing in a future life, but some things are too remote from us to be an object of speculation that troubles thought. . . . To concern oneself with ideas of immortality is all very well for fashionable persons, especially for fair ladies who have nothing to do. But a superior man, who is already aware of being something here below, and must consequently work, battle, act, leaves the next world in peace and is content with being active and useful in this one.' His morality is bold and straightforward: 'Always hold fast to the present hour. Every state of duration, every second, is of infinite value. . . . I have staked on the present as one stakes a large sum on one card, and I have sought without exaggerating to make it as high as possible.' It should not be forgotten that at the end of the second 'Faust' he makes Faust an engineer. Provided that activity is possible, world systems seem to him useless.

Scorn for all doctrines that are still such. Contrast with that Péguy's remark: 'Not to be concerned any longer with great questions is like smoking a pipe, a habit which you take to when age is gaining on you, whereby you believe you are becoming a man although the truth is merely that you have grown old. Happy the man who keeps his youthful appetite for metaphysics.'

(b) Goethe is distasteful to all rebels. That is natural, because he accepts life. Revolutions seem to him inevitable, not desirable. 'If one could make humanity perfect, a state of perfection would then be conceivable. Until then everything will go in a so-so way. One party will have to suffer whilst the other will enjoy well-being. . . . The wisest

thing is that everyone should do the job for which he was born and which he has learned, and should not prevent others from doing theirs. . . ! In art as in politics, Goethe has a horror of criticism: destruction, he thinks, is vain; beauty lies in building. To which it would be simple (and fair) to reply that acceptance of the world is too easy when one is Goethe and a minister of State. But to scorn the world is no less easy when one is Jean-Jacques or Julien Sorel. The true triumph of the spirit would be to out-soar all these egocentric philosophies. The rebel can be a hero only when his rebellion is pure. If I detect in it traces of wounded self-love, then I am a rebel in my turn.

(c) This morning I heard J. de M. reproach Goethe for his success at the Court of Weimar: 'People don't do that,' she said, 'unless they have a certain weakness of character. On the contrary, the essence of genius lies in its inability to accept and acclimatize itself.' The problem, I think, is really more complex. Because a man is maladjusted, unhappy, touched with genius, he imposes a respect for his originality on a great number of others (Goethe, Byron, Proust). From the moment when he makes good and becomes to them a great man, he has *succeeded*, whether he likes it or not. . . . He may remain troubled in spirit. What human being is not? But he is no longer so as he was in the days of 'Werther' or the 'Nourritures Terrestres'. . . . Has he thereby ceased to be a great writer? I cannot see that he has. But it was fear of success that made Wilde crave for catastrophe, and say that, without Saint Helena, Napoleon would have been less great. 'Nothing fails like success,' said (I think) Blake. In any case, are there any unalloyed successes? Suffering is the most fairly distributed thing in the world. Look at Goethe's despair after Marienbad, in the conversations with the Chancellor Müller. Goethe was not *born* in success: he conquered his liberty.

(d) Goethe annoys not only romantics (for he was in his way a classic writer, and René Berthelot is right in saying that his wisdom has affinities with that of Voltaire), but also the self-analysts that we all are to-day, for in his eyes a great work of art is objective. The notion of seeking to know oneself is to him absurd. 'With all his senses and all his aspirations man strives outwards, towards the world surrounding him, and he has quite enough to do to become familiar with it, and observe it in so far as it is necessary to his ends. He is conscious of himself only in experiencing pain or pleasure. Man is an obscure being; he is ignorant of whence he comes and whither he is going. He knows little of the world, and even less of himself. I do not know myself, and God preserves me from knowing myself.' In this respect he is at one with Flaubert, and at odds with our own generation; but that he is wrong remains unproven. Thibaudet has shown how the only really truthful confessions are those made with a semblance of objectivity under the mask of a character (*Madame Bovary*, *Mlle de Vinteuil*).

We must not forget that a man's mode of life in practice helps us to judge his theoretic code of morality. Eckermann's description of the aged Goethe is a very beautiful one: 'He was seated in a wooden arm-chair before his writing-desk; I found him amazing gentle, like a man suffused with heavenly peace, remembering an unspeakable happiness that he had once enjoyed, and which was returning once more to float over his spirit.' But once again, it is easier to inspire love if one is a Nietzsche or a Shelley than if one is a Goethe or a Meredith. This does not prove the inferiority of Goethe or Meredith. It merely proves that those men who seek a compensation in literature ('reading, that unpunished vice . . .') are for the most part unhappy men who can recognize themselves best in another unhappy man. The men of action, who ought to like Goethe, do not read, or read but

little. In art there is a premium on madness. 'If I wanted to pursue fame . . . ' says Valéry. But one must remain true. . . .

AUGUST 25TH.—In France, I think, we are ignorant of the place still held in England by love as a passion. The novels of Maurice Baring (such as 'Daphne Adeane' or 'Cat's Cradle') may have helped some Frenchmen to realize the 'Princesse de Clèves' element which exists in present-day England alongside the cynicism of Huxley's characters. The English keep their passions well hidden because of their strong sense of modesty in matters of sentiment, but when these passions break through the surface impassivity they do so with a violence that would have delighted Stendhal. B. told me the story of a friend of his, Julian S., who had been in love with a certain lady for ten years, and was jealous of her. One summer evening they were both invited to dine somewhere up the river, and three boats were waiting alongside the bank for the guests. The hostess allotted the places, but in ignorance or forgetfulness of this quite open liaison, she placed S. and his mistress in different boats. S. turned pale, and took his place between two ladies; he struggled to hide his distress, but could only keep gazing at the other boat. When the little flotilla reached the middle of the Thames he could bear it no longer, dived into the water in his evening dress, and swam over to join the one whom he loved.

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Another English story was told me by M. L. B. It may be called:

#### THE CORINTHIAN PORCH

Lord and Lady Barchester had spent the forty years of their married life in the same house in Park Lane. But after



the War they found themselves in difficulties. Investments had gone wrong; one of their sons had been killed; his widow and children were left on the hands of his parents, and the income tax was five shillings in the pound. Lord Barchester was forced to face the fact that he could not keep up both his family seat in Sussex and the Park Lane house. After long hesitation he at last resolved to discuss his difficulties with his wife. He had long been afraid of distressing her. Thirty years before, there had been stormy times in their married life, but old age had brought peace, indulgence, and fondness.

'My dear,' he said, 'I am dreadfully sorry, but I can see only one way of ending our days honourably, and I know it will be painful to you. I leave you free to accede to it or to set it aside. Listen: land adjoining the Park has reached a very high price. A certain speculator is anxious to build a block of flats, and he needs our corner as it forms an enclave in his property. He offers to buy it at a price which would not only enable us to find another house in the same district, though a little further back from the Park, but would also let us keep a substantial margin to pass our few remaining years in comfort. Still, I know that you are more attached to Barchester House than I am, and I don't want to do anything you would not like.'

Lady Barchester agreed to the exchange, and a few months later the old couple were settled in a new house, a few hundred yards away from the one they had been obliged to leave. It was already in the hands of the housebreakers. When they went out, Lord and Lady Barchester passed daily in front of their old home, and it was strange for them to see the slow undoing of a shape which had been the most essential and stable feature in their universe. When they saw their home roofless they felt as if they themselves were exposed to the wind and rain. Lady Barchester felt the sharpest twinge when the front wall was ripped open and

she saw, as if on a stage scene set for all to see, the room that had belonged to Patrick, her dead son, and the room in which she herself had spent nearly forty years.

From the street she looked up at the glazed chintz with its dark background which had lined the walls of her room. Through so many hours of mourning and illness, and of happiness too, had she gazed on it, that the stuff's pattern seemed the very background on which her own life had been woven. A few days later came a great surprise. The workmen had ripped off the chintz and there came into view a black and white wallpaper which she had completely forgotten, but immediately, and with puzzling vividness, that paper evoked her long liaison with Harry Webb. How often, gazing on those Japanese houses, had she spent her mornings in an endless dreaming after reading the delicious letters that Harry wrote to her from the Far East! She had loved him deeply. And now he was Sir Henry Webb, one of His Majesty's Ambassadors.

Soon the rain washed off that black and white paper, and beneath it another was revealed. It was a rather ugly flowered pattern, but Lady Barchester remembered how she chose it with great deliberation at the time of her marriage in the year 1890. In those days she wore blue serge dresses, and yellow amber necklaces, she tried to look like Mrs Burne Jones and went to tea on Sundays with old William Morris. And whilst those fragments of pink and green paper could be seen, she would pass several times a day in front of the house, for its pattern recalled her young days, when she was in love with Lord Barchester.

At last the walls themselves came down, and one day when Lord and Lady Barchester went out to stroll in the Park together, they saw that nothing was left of the house but the little Corinthian porch over the front door. It was an odd, sad spectacle, for there, at the top of the steps, that

porch opened on to a desolation of rubble heaped up beneath a wintry sky. For a long time Lady Barchester watched the clouds passing between the white pillars, and then she said to her husband:

‘That porch is linked in my memory with the saddest day of my life. I have never dared to mention it, but we are so old now that it doesn’t matter. It was at the time when I loved Harry and you were in love with Sybil. One night I had been to a ball to meet Harry when he came back from Tokio. I had been looking forward to the meeting for weeks, but Harry had really only returned home to become engaged, and he danced the whole evening with a young girl, pretending not to notice me. I cried in the carriage on the way home. I reached the house. I felt so disfigured with my tears that I hadn’t the courage to let you see me. I pretended to ring the bell and let the coachman go, and then I stood leaning against one of those pillars, and stayed there for a long time. I was sobbing. It was raining very hard. I knew that you yourself were thinking about another woman and I thought my life was finished. That little porch is going to vanish, and that is what it reminds me of.’

Lord Barchester had listened to the story with sympathy and interest. He took his wife’s arm affectionately.

‘I’ll tell you what we shall do,’ he said. ‘This porch is the tomb of your memories, and before it is demolished we shall go and buy some flowers together and lay them at the top of the steps.’

And the old couple went to a florist’s, brought back some roses, and laid them at the foot of one of the Corinthian pillars. Next day the porch had disappeared.

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AUGUST 28TH.—Rain . . . reading . . . trying to form a clear idea of Adler’s psychology.

Like Freud, he insists on the part played by childhood in the formation of character. When children cease to be protected from the universe by a mother or nurse, they all experience a sense of inferiority. They are clumsy, they know nothing of the world, childhood is a period of difficult apprenticeship. But the normal child soon recognizes that he is capable of learning the job of being a man and solving the problems set by life. He then forms an optimistic character and thereafter tries to find his place in society as it exists.

On the other hand, the child who feels abnormal, whether on account of bodily or mental shortcomings, or because he is born into bad surroundings, or because he is unfairly treated by his family, feels a *need for superiority* which is greater in proportion as his sense of inferiority is acute. Throughout his life he will require a compensation, a *margin of security*, because of the memory of his spoilt childhood. The normal being will also need security, but for him the compensation is simple—it lies in society itself. An organized society is merely the sum of compensations necessary for the individuals composing it to feel themselves protected. Granted the existence of this society, normal beings can readily enough realize their desires in it. For instance, when sexual desire comes to life in them, they look simply for the woman capable of loving them, they do not doubt the possibility of finding her, or, having found her, of pleasing her.

The abnormal adolescent, however, feels powerless to satisfy his desires in the social world. His tendency therefore is to isolate himself, he regards himself as in an enemy country, he holds an exaggerated view of the hostility and malevolence of human beings. How can he alter? In the tales he listens to, in works of art, the abnormal man seeks only himself, he takes far more interest in whatever recalls

the sadness and seamy side of existence than in things that might possibly make him optimistic. The melancholy man likes melancholy books, the mischievous man likes cruel books. This explains the success of men of genius who have at the same time been invalids (Dostoievsky or Nietzsche), and the comparative unpopularity of Goethe. The born pessimist's attitude towards life is one of escaping, and because of that he will not recognize tenderness or friendship if he encounters either. He will become an anti-social individual, feeling tranquillity only in solitude, or, if he lives amongst other men, requiring a very wide margin of security. ('I feel equal to them only if I am leading them.') Consequently he will be proud, often rebuffed, sometimes wearing a mask of hypocrisy. Incredible pride of small apocalyptic shopkeepers, desiring a revolution or the end of the world for the satisfaction of their vainglorious anxiety. . . .

Let this proud-souled pessimist seek refuge, not in some external catastrophe, but in subjective and inward satisfactions, and he will become a neurotic. The madman lives in a dream world where all his inferiorities find compensation. The neurotic makes his escape without crossing the bounds of madness; he evades the battle under various pretexts, explaining his renunciation of love by saying that he is not interested in women, of honours by disowning ambition or alleging ill-health. These excuses enable him to mask the real social or physiological inferiority which is the root cause of his renunciation.

A favourite method of the neurotic is to prolong in adult life the method he has found successful in childhood, that is to say, the admission of weakness. Many children play a comedy of weakness, and many grown-up women do likewise. In the most favourable circumstances the abnormal man will manage to impose himself on the world by his very neurosis. The man of genius forces the acceptance of his

subjective world by other men, because that universe corresponds to a widespread contemporary need for compensation (witness Proust)

To Adler, therefore, every man's will is controlled by a central need—to compensate a childhood inferiority. There is thus formed what he terms an *aim of life*. This aim is so chosen that, if we attain it, our personality will be raised to a point of superiority that will make life supportable. It can be attained by roundabout paths. A man who needs to excuse his failure to himself will say, 'I don't succeed because I drink, or because I smoke opium.' His drunkenness will keep him from thinking 'I don't succeed because I am an inferior creature,' and he will find a comprehending fraternity, even a freemasonry, among drinkers or drug-takers. A woman physiologically incapable of loving will build up for herself a whole system of pride, or hatred of the male, in order to avoid the thought of her physiological infirmity. Others will blame their parents, and a still greater number, society. The pamphleteer is really far less concerned with striking at his victim than with convincing himself of his own worth by damaging the worth of others. The malevolent man is nearly always a weak man, just as the cynic in love is a man who has once been sentimentally unhappy. Every man who feels ill adjusted to the life of his time will become, if he has talent, a scorner of his age. From adolescence, when men reach what Adler calls the fighting line, there are some who enter the battle on the terms offered, and others who become shirkers. They do not consciously tell themselves 'I realize that it is not easy to come out in the front rank, so I'll do all I can to live as little as possible,' but they behave just as if they thought on those lines. They escape from society, declaring that they do not like it, or that they despise it.

A man's actions do not enable one to gauge his character.

They are merely signs to be interpreted. Generosity may be serving vanity. The proud man makes a sacrifice for a friend; but in so doing he is putting himself on top of his friend. A woman may with the utmost kindness allow her husband to see other women, or even to be unfaithful to her, but she may do this through pride, and because, knowing the outcome to be inevitable, she prefers to have the illusion of having provoked it. A man will take a modest seat in the back row of a meeting, so as to be invited up to the front. People who always arrive late for dinner, who wait for ten invitations before accepting, who accept only on certain strict conditions, all show their own vanity by these habits; others, again, do likewise by their desire to be present at all fashionable functions. The craving for superiority knows a thousand by-paths. It creates solitaries and men of ambition, nearly all artists, and most saints. We all know persons who, in the first phase of a friendship, give the impression of being passionately interested in others, and are always talking of humanity and of their love for their fellow-men, and then, in a second phase, lift the veil and appear as humanitarians only for vanity.

It should not be supposed that such an inferiority complex is necessarily a flaw in an individual. On the contrary, the absence of some such complex is rare in even the most remarkable men. The entirely normal being is a herd creature; he will accept society because he will there be perfectly at ease. Living will be easy, and average success will be within his reach. He will rarely succeed on a grand scale, because the 'will to power' is far stronger in the outlaw. The men who make great revolutions, great empires, great works of art, are nearly always men who have suffered from a sense of inferiority. Byron was strong through his infirmity, Dostoevsky and Flaubert through epilepsy, Napoleon through his unhappy adolescence, Disraeli through his Jewish birth.

But if the inferiority complex thus appears to be almost something desirable, what is the aim of the Adlerian psychology? It is to define in certain cases the individual's goal in life, so that he may understand himself clearly. Not every neurotic succeeds in discovering his compensation. Very often a physiological ill is grafted on to the psychological one. Adler has shown, for instance, that many cases of migraine are mere acts of evasion. They provide an excuse for avoiding struggle. Proust's asthma was doubtless originally an attempt at escape. Adler has had under his care a young woman whose neurosis took the form of an extraordinary activity in small matters. She spent all her time in arranging things, in keeping her accounts with incredible exactness of detail, and her husband and relatives said: 'She is killing herself with work!' As a matter of fact she was of lazy temperament, and her anxiety to shun the greater tasks which life offered gave rise to this method of escape.

Why is it often necessary to make the neurotic explain his aim in life? Because nearly always the great evil is the sense of isolation. You harbour in yourself a secret grievance that cuts you off from other people. That isolation is broken by the avowal. It does not give power but it gives peace, because the true aim, the true compensation, is to find self-expression and to feel that one has been understood. Through expression the patient becomes a match for his inferiority. He has dominated it, and, above all, has fitted it into the social scheme, because other men can now understand it. (And this is why the artist-neurotic is cured by his art. The serenity of the aged Goethe arises from the fact that the adolescent Goethe, in 'Werther', killed Werther.)

I should be quite ready to accept Adler's system as a whole. He seems to me mistaken in regarding the aim of life as something completely formed in childhood; for my



own part, I can see the aim of life being transformed in the course of life itself. Whenever we experience a new sense of inferiority, a new need for compensation comes into being, and the aim of life alters. For instance, a politician beaten at an election will show hostility to the parliamentary régime, and his aim of life will be to become a writer, perhaps an anti-political writer. A man deceived by women will become a conqueror in order to fortify his pride. A woman who realizes at twenty that she is ill-adapted for love will construct a philosophy hostile to love.

It might be said, of course, that these ideas exist in a different form in La Rochefoucauld. Using different terms, he showed that the 'aim of life' is at the root of most of the virtues. In another sense the essence of the Adlerian remedy was also the 'Know thyself' of Thales, and in Spinoza's remark: 'An emotion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it.' But ideas have to be refashioned in every epoch in a form that suits the intellectual habits of that epoch. To Moses the laws of hygiene had to be divine ordinances; to the modern man, moral laws have to be medical ordinances. Yet the laws themselves change but little and slowly.

What should we retain of Adler's case? It is desirable to avoid the creation of any excessively painful sense of inferiority, and we should therefore (a) give the child an exact impression of its own strength, not giving it a sense of being either stronger or weaker than it actually is, and avoiding alterations in its place in the scale of family values; (b) giving young people at the time of the formation of their sexual life opportunities for frank conversation to prevent them from regarding themselves as abnormal beings; (c) lessen rivalries, ambition, and inequality. In certain forms ambition may be valuable, but we have allowed too much scope in life to anti-social feelings.

The ant suffers. Whence Rotary Clubs, friendly societies, Young Communists' associations—tentative ant-heaps.

\* \* \* \* \*

*One Day:* Personal column of *The Times*: 'LADY, owning new luxury car, will drive anybody anywhere. Write Box No. . . .'

And in the next column, another personal advertisement: 'WHAT does the LORD thy GOD demand of thee except that thou fear the LORD thy GOD?'

*Oxford:* A philosophical congress. Prof. Northrop of Yale reads a paper on the relation between Time and Eternity in the light of contemporary physics. He thinks that hitherto we have attached too much importance to Time, and hopes that Eternity will now resume its sitting place.

Prof. Schlick of Vienna expresses his conviction that we are on the threshold of a new era in philosophy. He opines that books will no longer be written about philosophy, but that all books will be written by philosophers. (See *Pickwick Papers*, *passim*.)

*Bristol:* Meeting of the British Association. Professor Appleton describes the echoes of wireless waves, certain of which arrive thirty seconds after the original signal. From what can these waves be reflected? Thirty seconds is too long for the moon, and too short for the sun. A difficult and fascinating subject.

*Letters to the Editor:* A reader of *The Times* suggests that in future, as the meteorologists seem quite incapable of forecasting conditions, the daily weather report should be compiled by a committee of old Scottish shepherds.

Then, a clergyman writes to record his observations of the games of a squirrel and two magpies. The squirrel climbed the trunk of a tree whilst the two magpies followed it by hopping up from branch to branch. The game was repeated several times over. It was clearly a race. The correspondent

is glad to be able to say that the magpies behaved like really sporting birds, and took no unfair advantage of the fact that they could easily have flown.

SEPTEMBER 1ST.—Long talk with Harold B. on individualism. This is a subject on which I am not in agreement with several people whom I hold in the highest respect (Alain, André Siegfried). Both of these eulogize radical individualism. But I believe that real individualism is possible only in a stable society. B. brings me some articles in the *New Republic* by John Dewey, setting forth the problem in a way that I find both fresh and interesting.

Dewey's central idea is that our modern societies, as moulded by centralized industry, are corporative organisms which ought to be controlled by collective decisions and have passed beyond the comprehension and strength of an individual. In industry as in agriculture, a pioneering age did exist. But that age has passed. The bold and picturesque type of economic corsair will disappear. Notwithstanding hostile laws (such as the Sherman Law in the United States), agreements between the producers in a country, and even international agreements, are found to offer the only chance of mastering a machinery which is made fragile by the very fact of its vastness. The machine has killed the independent captain of industry, just as firearms placed in the hands of the masses killed the great feudal barons.

This 'collective' character of our age is not peculiar to industry; it holds true in nearly every sphere of human activity. Thus, the United States Government is trying to organize agriculture on collective lines. Sports are team sports, and even the team demands for its support the loyalty of the group from which it emerges. Crime itself, formerly the unruly action of an isolated indivi-

dual, is becoming the organized activity of a corporate body.

The first feature, therefore, is an epoch of collective action; the second, an epoch of unstable equilibrium. Collective action ensures men's happiness when they wholeheartedly believe in the utility of this activity and feel that it expresses their own will (the ant-hill). It becomes irksome when those who ought to participate in it lose faith in its efficacy. Now the misfortune of an age lies in the fact that many individuals have lost their trust in the code that has hitherto controlled their actions. Incapable of suggesting another code, they are powerless to transform society. But they are stricken, and, finding no remedy, they seek refuge in drink, in sensuality, in mystical sects, or in a swift series of violent spectacles. (Revolt of the ant-hill, analogous to that in the early centuries of the Christian era.)

What can be done to cure this malady of the individual? Put back the clock? Forswear science and the machine? That is very much as if a feudal baron of the sixteenth century had said. 'In order to save the noble spirit of feudalism, let us vow to go back to the good old sword of our sires, and never again to use the arquebus and cannon.' It is ingenuous to suppose the machine is the cause of our woes. The machine, like nature, is neither the friend nor the foe of mankind. It is itself a part of nature. It can be used for man's happiness if man knows how to master it. It ensures, and ought increasingly to ensure, leisure and an abundance of material benefits. If the workers have been filled with a sense of insecurity in our mechanical civilization, by overproduction or by the rapidity of technical advances, that is not the fault of the machine, but the fault of a humanity unable to take the necessary steps in a transitional age to safeguard the general security. Man is not merely subject to history; to a certain extent he makes history. It is certain

that our political and economic organization has fallen far behind the progress of our mechanical and scientific organization, that we are suffering from this disparity, and that it is at least partially incumbent on us to supply the remedy.

Men require food, clothes, warmth and light, and our civilization has supplied these boons more abundantly than any other. It has, I think, lessened the suffering caused by disease, poverty and harsh laws. On the other hand, man's need for security, leisure and spiritual balance has not diminished. Leisure will perhaps come through the shortening of working hours, which is inevitable as being the sole remedy against over-production and unemployment. Security is lacking in the modern world. The workers are not sure of having work; the middle-classes are not sure of the future of their children; states are not sure of living in peace. The most important task of the twentieth century is not so much the progressive conquest of matter as to halt and organize the territory already conquered; and that, as the Greek philosophers said long ago, means the refashioning of man himself.

In Dewey's opinion the cure for the sickness of the individual is to be found in a better political and economic organization of the State. To his opponents he would answer: 'You complain of the fact that thought is too collective, but I tell you the real trouble is that it is not collective enough.' The mental 'standardization' of our day is deplorable, not because it is profound but because it remains superficial. Millions of men accept the same absurdity at the same moment, but in a week have already ceased to believe it. The periods when mankind has known happiness are those during which united and homogeneous groups have freely accepted common and relatively stable beliefs, and those are the very periods which have produced the freest and most original individuals. For there is no freedom in

anarchy, intellectual or political. An individual outside any social organization would be an inconceivable monster, and in any case has never existed.

The romantic rebel is not a free individual. In his own way he conforms just as much as the diehard conservative. Passion deprives rebel and reactionary alike of judgment. In order to restore a true spiritual freedom in the modern world, according to Dewey, the peoples of our time must be brought to handle the relations of men with the same objective methods as have enabled humanity to master external things. Science has not accepted matter but transformed it. It must not accept economic anarchy, industrial crises and wars. No problems are incapable of being treated intelligently and systematically. The real individual is not the man who turns away from the spectacle of the 1932 world and gloomily exclaims 'How I wish I had lived in 1232!' It is the man who realizes that an individual life is possible only within a well-organized society, and offers the best that is in him towards the organization of his contemporary society.

*This attitude seems to me desirable and it is comparable to that of Heard's super-individuals. Is it possible for any large number of men?*

'I don't think so,' said B.

'Nor do I. But is that any reason for not adopting it?'

'Take care,' he said. 'You're on the path to socialism if you follow Dewey.'

'That doesn't matter to me. I'm not afraid of labels. I believe that capitalist society will be led to adopt certain forms of collective activity simply because the complexity of modern societies cannot be squared with a régime of feudal warfares. But these forms of collective action will not necessarily be *state* action, they may well be on a corporation basis.'

'And suppose society proves incapable of altering itself and giving up its folly?'

'Then society will perish—but of its own free will.'

SEPTEMBER 7TH.—Homeward journey. . . . Sad at leaving our bracken and common, but I promised to visit Geneva for the League of Nations Assembly. Reading on the boat some lectures by a German professor, Wilhelm Haas, on the subject—'What is European civilization?' They are interesting, and supplement very well the thesis of Gerald Heard, especially at a point where Heard seems to me to be incomplete—I mean, the part played in the intellectual drama of humanity by the development of positive science.

In essence Haas's theme is this: the scientific conquest of nature is a new idea and would have seemed very strange to the men of other epochs. To a Greek like Socrates the essential thing was not the mastering of nature by obeying her, but the knowledge of man. True, a Greek science did exist, but it was disinterested. Aristotle held that as soon as a science became technical, the man learned in that science ran the risk of becoming a merchant or a slave. To men of the Middle Ages the conquest of the spiritual world was the only thing of importance; the natural world was something accessory.

In the seventeenth century it came about that disinterested science (mathematics and astronomy) led to the observation of natural phenomena. The stars, their movements simplified by the enormous distances separating them from ourselves, were observed to be subject to fixed and simple laws, and from this came the notion that all natural phenomena could be made the objects of calculation, provided that the scientist observed in them only the measurable quantities. The method was wonderfully successful. Man-

kind discovered that obedience to the laws of nature enabled him to transform nature. And the result, within three centuries, was practical science, industry, and the immense power of man over matter.

For its essential validity this science required the hypothesis of an inert and mechanical nature. Nature as known to the Greeks, the dwelling-place of the Gods, or the Christian conception of nature, upset on occasion by miracles, or even the purely æsthetic view of nature held by the Chinese, did not concern science. A sacrifice had to be made, and if nature were to be mastered, the soul of nature must be taken from it.

To this the modern man is tempted to reply: 'And quite rightly so, because in actual fact nature has no soul.' Possibly; but the result has been that, for men of the scientific era, the idea of understanding has become identified with the idea of matter as something abstract and mechanical. When they have sought to examine the human spirit, or history, they have quite naturally fallen back on a method which had proved its efficacy. For three centuries now humane science has followed the lead of the natural sciences. Descartes and Spinoza made a geometry of the study of the passions; Taine, a contemporary of Claude Bernard the physiologist, made a physiology of the same study. In the nineteenth century spiritual values were discounted by many scientists and philosophers; this was done without valid proof, and even contrary to proof, for observation can show more proofs of the importance of the spirit in man than of *physico-chemical connections*. *Man's attitude towards himself changes*. He no longer believes in his own power. The individual man of the scientific era loses the faculty of *feeling himself to be a focus of energy*. The Hindu ascetic and the Catholic saint believe in a mysterious power in man, and the primitive man believes in that power because he



feels it within him, but Hippolyte Taine and Adrien Sixte assume *à priori* that everything within us happens according to mechanical laws. 'Vice and virtue are products, like sugar and sulphuric acid.' A disheartening self-abasement, for it robs mankind of his faith in mankind.

The time comes (and it has done so in our own day) when man feels the lack of that power and regrets this sacrifice. He discovers that science does not prove the reality of a universal mechanism. The phenomena of life and spirit have never been capable of explanation by scientific methods. The 'profane' success of modern scientists like Eddington, Whitehead, or Louis de Broglie, lies in their support of the compatibility of science with the idea of human freedom. The European mind accepted the sacrifice with enthusiasm; it is now beginning to regret it. Having failed to find happiness in the triumph of a scientific civilization, humanity is revolting against it. And it is curious to note that the present rebellion of the conservative bourgeoisie against the machine has a close analogy to the Rousseauesque sympathies of the nobility about 1760. Just as in Rousseau's time, sentiment is opposed to intelligence: a false opposition, as I think, because man cannot be cut up into distinct faculties except by an artificial operation. But I see clearly (in spite of my sympathies being in the intellectual camp) how much that is genuine and deep-seated lies beneath this rebellion.

The problem, I think, ought to be presented in quite different terms. Why attack scientific civilization? Can it be abolished? Is that desired? Are not the Russians, who did not possess it, now engaged in setting it up for themselves? In any case, is it really true that men were happier long ago, in a pastoral or agricultural civilization? The yearning for a return to nature is a chronic form of human nostalgia. But the peasant who worked twelve or fourteen hours a day in

summer, or his wife and daughter who drudged year in, year out on heavy handicrafts, would tell a very different tale. In any case, the advance of machinery has certainly lessened the evils caused by the first industrial revolution. Read Disraeli's 'Sybil', and see whether the English working-classes of his day were freer and less 'standardized' individuals than the workers of our own time. Besides, what do these comparisons matter? Devey is certainly right in saying that the problem is not to escape from our own day, but to understand our own day and to create the age that will follow it.

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Paris to Geneva by train. Crossing Paris I met Jean Pré vost, who gave me a volume of Saint-Evremond for my journey.

'One of the great joys to be found in loving God,' he says somewhere, 'is to be able to lose those who love Him.' My own lack of religion has often made me regret that fond unity existing between friends who hold common, unargued beliefs.

Through the carriage window, the Cathedral of Sens as lovely as Saint-Wulfran at Abbeville (I don't know why one should call up the other—perhaps those watch-towers) Burgundian villages where the roofs of orange-red tiles blend with the other roofs of bluish slate. The colours of France. . . . To re-fashion man himself. But wherein? Perhaps by giving him a better understanding of the nature of human societies. We live on a decayed vocabulary. When I came through Paris I was pleased to find at my flat *these lines in a pamphlet which three young men had sent me* 'There is no opposition between "individual" and "social", for they derive from one another. The liberating truth which we put forward as the fundamental principle of a civilization to be built, is the condition of the liberation of personality . . . It is treason, therefore, to accept collec-

tive society as a makeshift and submit to the machine. It is likewise treason to make collective society an end in itself and deify the machine.' Neither submit, nor deify. Dominate. But shall we be willing to do so?

SEPTEMBER 12TH.—*Geneva.*

The Assembly hall looks more like a school than a parliament. . . . Surprising to see greybeards on those benches. . . . The kindergarten of peace. . . . During a speech by Sir Robert Borden which I cannot hear properly, I note on the margin of my agenda paper some

#### APHORISMS WRITTEN DURING A SESSION OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Here is a parliament of all the nations on this globe, met to provide laws for themselves. Which does it look like? A class-room, a town council's room, a Protestant conventicle. This simplicity is reassuring in itself. Anything that reminds men of so many familiar spectacles could only be human. A healthy society, after the pangs of childbirth, must bring forth desks, a speaker's platform, conventions; from this atmosphere of boredom I recognize that the League, a society of nations, has not brought forth a monster.

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The annual Assembly is more of a religious ceremony than a political discussion; quite unwittingly the speakers there assume the tone of the preacher; the word 'Peace' recurs here in every sentence like the word 'God' in other temples, and it is uttered in just the same manner.

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Every year, in the first week of September, a great sacred orator (Father Briand, or the Rev. Arthur Henderson) preaches a solemn sermon in the League Assembly on a text

of the Covenant. Then the congregation sing their favourite hymns: Hymn No. 159, 'Disarmament—Security'; or Hymn No. 163, 'Security—Disarmament'; or Hymn No. 137, 'Must we, gentlemen, let politics come before economic facts?'

It is an excellent thing for the miscreant to yield to the discipline of the Churches; ceremonial soothes and quells the passions.

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In the notes above, and in these that follow, I mean no irony; I am only trying to give an exact description of an institution which I believe to be useful. Its real machinery is more secret. Like the mechanism of any modern society, it consists of a permanent bureaucracy, sittings of committees, lobby conversations. The Assembly is necessary for the prestige of the League, as reviews and parades are for regimental discipline.

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At Geneva, verbal boldness must be in inverse proportion to the war budget of the Power represented by the orator.

\* \* \* \* \*

Taboos can only be raised in a society which is gathering strength. The League is not yet twelve years old; in a decade or two it will be possible to allow irony and enthusiasm. Meanwhile, let everyone get accustomed, without disgust or alarm, to seeing those monstrous creatures—foreigners.

\* \* \* \* \*

The institution of Geneva would really be indispensable if it only served to bring hostile statesmen face to face with each other. At a distance the mental picture of an unknown enemy takes on the most detestable features. Face to face, a Rumanian and a Hungarian are astounded to see men, and pleasant men too.

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Whatever surprises is impolite. Commonplaces are comforting. At Geneva the art of saying nothing has been brought to its highest point of perfection. The more empty a speech, the more do the experts in the lobbies exclaim on its subtlety. The few positive elements floating in this transparent void assume, in contrast, a singular brightness, ill-understood by the layman. He tries to judge them on their face value, which is small, and not in relation to the context, which heightens them. But the real expert can discern allusions there, as well hidden as those of the old maids at Combray when they thanked Swann for his roses.

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In the lobbies you will hear certain persons regretting that a speaker was not more precise. Make no mistake: they are his enemies, looking out for an imprudence with which to lay him low.

\* \* \* \* \*

The happiest result of Geneva is not that it has 'given the death-blow to the old diplomacy', but that it has given the tone and subtleties of that diplomacy to the statesmen who despised it. Under various names, Monsieur de Norpois never leaves the Geneva platform.

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Decision at Geneva must be made unanimously. It is therefore necessary to find formulas that seem to be hollow (and enable everyone to vote for them) and yet contain, well tucked away, the necessary undertaking. They manage to do it.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Dull yourselves,' said Pascal. Devotional practices are a path to faith. The hostile statesman coming to Geneva and living amongst believers soon feels his contempt being watered down. Every politician has a desire to please. Despite himself, his tone is not that of Berlin, or London, or

Rome, or Paris. He still maintains his heresies, but with the Geneva unction. Before long he will be singing in the choir.

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The lobbies of Geneva are the first sketch of a world public opinion.

• • • • •  
'These speeches and committees and resolutions soothe anxiety but do not cure it. . . . A narcotic is not a remedy, only an expedient.' All quite true, but in an acute crisis the patient must be soothed in order to make his sickness curable.

• • • • •  
The loves and hatreds of the peoples are based not on sober thoughts, but on memories, fears and phantasms. There are such things as collective psychoses. A people, like an individual, can be the victim of an inferiority complex that makes it shy, timid, and irritable. Thus the Germans believe they cannot inspire affection, the French that they cannot be organized, the English that they cannot be logical. These obscure and fallacious ideas should be studied and stripped bare.

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The mental maladies of nations, like those of individuals, have often a physical cause. An economic crisis is toxic to the mind and sets up an inexplicable uneasiness. Research into the stability of prices and monetary reform will perhaps prove the surest cure for aggressive chauvinism.

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The League of Nations is often blamed for the slowness of its methods, but I should be tempted to praise them for that. Every civilization ought to deaden the reflexes of the brute in man by a set of reducing gear-ratios. In questions affecting territorial claims, a question adjourned is often

more than half-solved. 'It is urgent that we should wait,' a model old diplomat used to say.

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The League of Nations can no more guarantee peace than a doctor can guarantee a cure. Is that any reason for giving up the doctor?

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Whether the peoples like it or not, their destinies are now so interwoven that the League of Nations cannot now disappear. If some catastrophe swept it away to-morrow, it would rise again under another name. As Gilbert Murray has well said, the League may not be efficacious, but it is certainly indispensable.

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Readers of these aphorisms will think me sceptical, and praise or blame me according to their own feelings with regard to the League of Nations. But those who have read this journal will realize, on the contrary, how serious I am in attaching great importance to ceremonial in the collective life of the peoples. Wasn't it on the journey I took on the first day of these holidays that I noted, in connection with Malinowski's book, the importance of the conventions amongst primitive people? In any matter of relations between different peoples we are primitives. It is full circle.

SEPTEMBER 13TH.—I was wrong last month when I criticized Alain's phrase about the pilot in the storm. Here, at Geneva, one realizes better how the man of action ought to steer as the waves come and beware of far-flung projects. In Time and Reality problems are never as Intellect imagined them. Questions that looked the most dangerous are suddenly resolved one day by circumstances, or by natural changes. Perhaps the Polish Corridor will quite soon cease to be a difficulty. How? Why? We cannot foresee. But it

is possible that just when the European perils of 1931 vanish into a thin smoke, other events, inconceivable to-day, will become urgent and formidable. More than once the world believed in a war on account of Morocco, it came on account of a murder in Bosnia. It was with an inaccurate comparison that I answered Alain when I said that 'the pilot knows that he is sailing to Havre and is certain of reaching there'. For the Ocean of Time has only one coast, that of our birth. We do not know the ever receding inaccessible shores towards which the blind winds, the everlasting tides, are driving us. We can only steer towards some great light, such as peace, and try to keep the vessel afloat.

SEPTEMBER 14TH —I have not been well during the whole of my stay in Geneva. However, I have not been at all unhappy, for I am surrounded by friends. But the nights are hard. Unable to sleep I re-read this journal. What are the thoughts to which all this reading and brooding has brought me this summer? To-day, September the fourteenth, nineteen hundred and thirty, looking over a sleeping Geneva, what do I believe?

I believe that the world of appearances is the only one that will ever be known to us, that our spirit cannot attain to an essential reality distinct from these appearances, that in any case the very nature of such a reality is inconceivable to us, and that the sole reality for man is the shadows of the cavern as perceived by him or by other men.

I believe that human wisdom has discovered certain connections between these shadows, and that many of them are obedient to certain laws possibly statistical but still consistent, which allow men to divine and to shape the future in an always increasing, yet eternally small, measure. Other shadows there are which elude the mind and can be apprehended only by the heart. Others again move remotely in



a flux that offers no foothold at all. Disease and war produce evils so terrible that it should be possible to bring men to combine against the fates.

I believe that a man of courage should recognize not only the hypothetical nature of all human knowledge, but also the ability of the intelligence, backed by experience, to make continual adjustment of the hypothesis in order to make it conform as closely as possible to the ever-invisible model whose movements it helps us to foretell.

I believe that the human will, free within those narrow bounds in which more powerful forces enclose it, is, in the actual state of our knowledge, a necessary and possible hypothesis. I believe that man can give pledges and live up to them: I believe that, under the clockwork vault of the stars, he should do his best to create relatively stable societies, subject to conventions recognized as such, but respected because they alone can give a sense of peace and security to savage and unhappy animals. . . .

Three o'clock in the morning. A touch of fever. I must try to sleep.

## THE HIDDEN TREASURE

'WHAT is the meaning of life?' I brooded.

It was a Sunday in June. The walls were warm under the glare of sun, and at open windows sat men in their shirt-sleeves dozing over the newspapers. In my post was a thick, heavy letter from America. I had opened it first.

'What is the meaning of life?' wrote the American symposiarch. 'The astronomers have taught us that the whole of human history is but a moment in the trajectory of a star. The historians have shown us that all progress is chimerical, that all greatness ends in decadence, the psychologists, that love is merely a phenomenon of localized congestion. The life of our societies is but a pullulation of human insects, a planetary mildew which will some day disappear. Nothing is certain, except defeat and death, a sleep from which no one has yet awoken . . . Do you not think that modern Science, by disclosing these truths and expelling from the heavens the divinities who formerly dwelt there, has robbed us of the illusions which alone enabled men to live? If you do not think so, can you tell us what is the meaning of life to you, what is the mainspring of your energy? Where do you find your consolations and hopes? In fact—on what hidden treasure do you live?'

A whiff of hot tar rose from the street, and the snorting of a motor-car. A bareheaded woman limped past, carrying cherries in her basket. A butcher's boy made his tricycle zig-zag across the empty burning street. 'What is the mean-

ing of life?' I thought. 'What is the mainspring of my energy?' I thought. 'Upon what hidden treasure are they living, that butcher, that lame woman, and that chauffeur?' I thought. A maidservant leaned out; a policeman looked up. My fancy turned to the fictitious. . . .

(i)

First of all (I said to myself), a rocket-shell capable of carrying men to the moon has been constructed. Esnault-Pelterie has succeeded not only in going beyond the zone of terrestrial gravity, but also, by means of rockets discharged backwards, in checking the downward fall so as to make the shock of landing easy and harmless. A first shell, manned by Frenchmen, has made the circuit round the Moon, lateral rockets enabling it to take the necessary turns, and it has come back to its starting-point without serious accident. Some Englishmen have thereupon volunteered to form an expedition to land on the Moon itself. They have set off in four shells, taking with them the materials necessary for making oxygen, for reversing the shell and propelling it back to the Earth.

Here it would be necessary to describe the arrival on the Moon, the desolation of the place, the setting-up of the oxygen factory, the solemn establishment of a General Government of the Moon. On a heavenly body having neither atmosphere nor steam, the production of oxygen and of some synthetic foodstuff would be difficult. But there is nothing to prevent the story being set in a future when such a synthesis is practicable.

The next chapter, ten years later, shows the colony prospering. Young people have married, children have been born, the oxygen market is well supplied, the housewives going there every morning with their balloons on their arms; in fact, it is possible to live, to love, to make a career, to

think, and to suffer on the Moon. But the colony, with limited mechanical resources, has been unable to build the shell for returning, or even to communicate with the Earth. Meanwhile, all these Englishmen continue to behave just as if they were in England. The Governor, Sir Charles Solomon, and Lady Solomon, dress for dinner every evening. On the King's Birthday, Sir Charles gives the toast of His Majesty, and all the colonists, men and women, murmur 'The King!' through their oxygen masks. An affecting picture.

Part two. Two hundred years have elapsed. The Moon is now inhabited by the seventh generation of Terrestrials. The greatly increased population are happy enough, and all these beings who have been born on the Moon can scarcely imagine another type of life. They have been taught in the schools that they are the subjects of an invisible King whose palace is very far away, on the gleaming globe of the Earth, but the best minds don't believe it. British conventions, however, still control the activities of life, and the public laws are promulgated in the name of the King of Great Britain and Ireland, Emperor of India, Protector of the Moon.

The reader then views the birth of an iconoclastic doctrine amongst the Anglo-Lunaries. A group of students and politicians organizes a campaign against the persistence of the Terrestrial legend. Who has ever seen this King in whose name they are ruled? Has not the time come to forget these out-of-date Anglo-Terrestrial conventions and to live a free life? Amongst the younger generation these theories meet with great success, but they are a vexation to the Conservative Party. 'Beware!' say the Conservatives. 'If you strip the Earth planet of our King and of the legendary Englishmen who bequeathed us our traditions, you will be making Lunar life extremely difficult. What meaning will your

life have for you then? What will be the mainsprings of your energy? On what hidden treasure will you live?’

And indeed events seem to justify those who argue thus, for this is a period of melancholy and romantic despair amongst the Lunar youth. Attempts at sexual freedom produce deep disorder of the mind. Boredom, as often happens, goes hand in hand with liberty, and riot follows in the wake of boredom. The peoples are restless, men are disquieted, and literature is excellent. For the first time a great writer appears on the Moon, a lyrical philosopher who rapidly acquires astonishing influence over the young. His most famous book is entitled ‘The Pastures of the Moon’; and to give a few notions of his teaching, my story would include certain extracts from this work.

‘The Pastures of the Moon’ is supposed to be addressed to an imaginary disciple, Selenos. ‘Why, Selenos, do you seek the meaning of life elsewhere than in life itself? Does the King of whom our legends tell really exist? I do not know. What matter to me, Selenos? I know that the mountains of the moon are beautiful when they are lit by the terrestrial crescent. If some day the King should appear in a shell like that of which our poets tell, guided by regal rockets, I shall recognize him. If he remains, as from the day of my birth he has remained, silent and invisible, I shall doubt his reality; but I shall have no doubts, Selenos, of life, of the beauty of the moment, of the happiness of action. The sophists are teaching you to-day that life is but a short movement of the trajectory of a star. What are you, Selenos, to the stars, or the stars to you? They are saying that nothing exists but defeat and death. But I say to you that nothing exists but victory and life. What do we know of our death, Selenos? Either the spirit is immortal and we shall not die, or the spirit dies with the body and we cannot live our death. And so, Selenos, live as if you were eternal, and do not believe

that your life is changed because they have proved to you that the Earth is empty. You are not living on the Earth, Selenos, but in yourself, yourself alone.' It is in allusion to this famous passage that a Lunary who seems to be out of touch with reality is currently said to be 'earthstruck'.

(II)

And this fiction, I thought, would be a possible answer to the American editor.

Opposite me, on the torrid balcony, a woman in a mauve dressing-gown was carefully arranging pots of boxwood, a geranium, a table. On the edge of the gutter a bird had perched, and with quick neat movements of its head was seeking scraps of food. Other fictions could be imagined, I thought. You could imagine an avenue in a park, crossed by two unbroken files of brown ants. One lot are coming from the ant-hill, the others are returning to it. They are all employed on a task of public utility, for they consult together, and each one of them, on meeting another ant going in the opposite direction, stops it and feels it. At this moment the left-hand line is halted by one ant, doubtless an eloquent one, who is waving his antennæ in the middle of the path.

The antennæ of the Wise Ant say this: 'You have been able to believe, and I have believed with you, my brethren, that the world of ants is the only important one, that it is watched over by the Great Ant, and that so lofty and noble a sentiment is devotion to the common ant-hill that it justifies our toils and torments. In very sooth, I told myself, it is hard to carry across these vast and perilous deserts, hemmed in by high mountain ridges of turf, our scraps of straw and our dead insects, with never a moment's rest. It is heroic thus to brave water, landslides, voracious birds, and those enormous twin masses which appear in the sky and

crush hundreds of ants in one rhythmic movement. But this heroism, I used to believe, is easy when one is vowed to the most glorious of all ant-hills.

‘Alas, my brethren, I have been studying and pondering and comparing, and this is what I have come to understand. This ant-hill of ours, which we have thought to be the centre of the world and the peculiar care of the Great Ant, is just like thousands of other ant-hills, each one of which is inhabited by thousands of ants who believe, every ant-jack of them, that their city is the very navel of the world. Are you astounded? But that is nothing! Ants may form a race beyond numbering, but yet they are only one race amongst thousands of races, one form amid the infinitely multiple forms of life. Do you protest, O ants? There is more to come. Not only is the ant merely one form amongst forms, but—I am afraid to utter the words, so grievously do they wound my pride—but it is one of the weakest and most scorned of forms. Do you wave your antennæ? Learn then as I have done, to divine the thoughts of those twin masses which so rhythmically crush into the dust the heroic legions of the ants. They belong to monstrous beings, so vast that we cannot see them, so powerful that we cannot imagine them, creatures to whom it is humiliating to think: ‘We are ourselves but ants in the eyes of God.’ You threaten? You turn angry? O, brother ants! You can pardon them, for they too are led astray by pride, even in their humility. The Earth on which they reign is but a splash of mud, and the duration of their race an instant in eternity.

‘And there, my brethren, is what I, the Wise Ant, have come to understand by observing men, and the movements of the sands and the stars. So, having seen for myself that all is vanity, I say this to you: “Why toil? Why carry bits of straw and corpses of butterflies? Why cross the perilous deserts of the avenue in long drudging files?”

'For what will be the fruit of your labour on this earth? You will rear one more generation of ants which in its turn will labour and suffer and be crushed under the huge feet of men. And these ants in their turn will rear other ants, and so on into times infinitely distant and infinitely near when the Earth will be no more than a dead world. That is why I, the Wise Ant, having pondered these matters, now say to you "Halt! Cease your vain toils! Be dupes no longer! Know that there is no Great Ant, that progress is illusion, that your desire to work is only a result of heredity, that nothing is certain on the Earth but the defeat and death of ants—a sleep from which there is no awakening . . .'

Such is the message transmitted by the antennæ of the Wise Ant whilst he bars the road to the procession of toilers. But a young ant thrusts him quietly aside. 'That's all very well, comrade,' he says, 'but we've got our tunnel to dig'

(III)

Yes, I thought, that story too would be a possible answer to the American philosopher. Science, he says, shows that the life of our societies is a mere pullulation of human insects, a planetary mildew. But does not even an insect desire to live? Does not a mildew seek to persevere in its existence? In any case, is it true that Science destroys man's faith in himself? What has Science done if it has not offered mankind efficacious prescriptions for the transformation of the world in which he has to live? Before Science, as after it, human societies were mildews. What has changed, except that these growths have altered the planet a little for the better?

'The change,' the American philosopher would say, 'lies in the fact that before Science these growths did not recognize themselves as such. These insects did not admit that they were insects, but believed in the pre-eminent dignity of man



Demons, genii, gods, leaned always over their activities, dictating them. The hope of a future life made them forget the miseries of earthly life. Rites and Laws, sustained by a supernatural authority, preserved them from doubt and anguish. But what gods to-day lend to Laws the power of their name? Osiris had succeeded to the tribal god, Jupiter to Osiris, Jehovah to Jupiter. Is it in Einstein's or in Eddington's name that you are going to impose limits to desire?

A puff of wind rippled the shadows of the sun-blinds on the white wall. It is true, I reflected, that man cannot live without rules. But an instinct warns him of them. As soon as some catastrophe shatters the pattern, he weaves it round himself anew. Now he makes it into the commandments of God, now into the teachings of Science, now into the decrees of an earthly King. But what matter? If we obliterate the reality of the symbol, as happened with my Lunaries, are the laws any less wise for that? Shall we not one day end by accepting them for what they are—necessary and shifting conventions? Shall we not one day admit that any proposition beyond the reach of human experience is a thing of no certainty? We know that we do not know. Is that such a dreadful confession? Is it a new reflection, and did Socrates ever say otherwise?

Evening was falling. Already the concierge in his braces was dragging out his chair on to the pavement. Lights were appearing in the windows of respectable homes, showing the laid tables. What is my hidden treasure, I asked myself? This revulsion from a doctrine? This love of action? The roofs turned suddenly darker, and behind them a milky gleam poured into the sky. O Selenos, I thought. . . . The Moon was rising.

## O YE OF LITTLE FAITH . . .

'HOW much?' I asked, indicating to M Cherkouen the curved dagger with its almost plain sheath

He stopped and murmured a few words in Arabic. Bowing, the merchant kissed the plump hand which emerged from the white *gandoura*

' . . . ' said the merchant

M Cherkouen smiled in his collar of white beard.

'He said fifty francs Offer him thirty . . . That will be all right.'

We were in the *souk* of Marrakesh Tall negroes astride minute donkeys were calling '*Bilek!*' as they parted the crowd As if by miracle the tightly-pressed people on foot opened a passage-way. Between two plains of white cloth a narrow horizontal slit showed the eyes of the women, they seemed beautiful As M Cherkouen passed, the old men sitting in the booths saluted, raising a hand to brow or breast.

'These merchants,' he said, 'are not like yours They keep no accounts, and know nothing of inventories or net costs . . . No . . . They buy, they sell, they live . . . If the end of the year leaves them with any money, then some put it into stock, others into land or houses . . . The wisest buy women, or carpets . . . '

'Have they no banking accounts?'

We were entering the *souk* of the dyers The copper bowls gleamed in the shadows, the air smelt of washed wool and indigo, on to the pegs of one stall an Arab boy was hooking skeins of ruddy violet, of bluish green

'A Moslem cannot have a banking account,' said M

Cherkaouen decisively. 'Our religion forbids us to lend with interest. To make money fructify by commerce is lawful, but money by money is against the will of God.'

'But, M. Cherkaouen, you are a well-paid official and you have no commerce of your own: don't you bank your money? Do you not buy shares?'

'I?' he said. (We were crossing the *soul* of the smiths; hammers sang; two crystal notes, one high, one low, beat time as we walked.) 'I? And how should I own shares without ceasing to be a good Moslem? Yes, it has sometimes happened that I have been obliged to deposit sums of money in a bank, but in such cases I have always warned the banker that I could not accept interest.'

'But surely, M. Cherkaouen, a Moslem must think of the future, like a Christian or a Jew. . . . When you are old, or when these merchants can no longer go on working . . .'

'In old age,' he said, 'a man has few needs, and to satisfy them he can easily sell off part of the property he has gained during the summer of his life. An old man needs women but little, not much food, and a smaller garden for shorter walks.'

'But we must anticipate everything, M. Cherkaouen. . . . Suppose the old man lives to be even older than he expected, and has already sold off all his goods, would it not be desirable for him to have a life income, a few pence, a certainty that he would not die of starvation?'

'His children ought to prevent that,' he answered.

'And if he has no children, or if they are dead?'

'Then,' said he, 'God will provide.'

\* \* \* \* \*

We were walking through a cloud of perfumes. Rose petals and orange blossom were tumbling from the flat straw baskets. '*Balek!*' cried the donkeymen. The women were buying flowers. '*Salaam!*' said the old men to M.

Cherkaouen. The sun was stabbing through the reeds. M. Cherkaouen moved on with his long nomad's stride that pushed the sandal forward.

'God will provide,' I reflected. . . . (In front of a tailor's booth two little boys were stretching the black thread and the white thread to be twisted to make a chain-stitch broi-dery under the needle.) 'Do you really believe,' I said aloud, 'that God is for ever leaning over this speck of mud, observing the destiny of each one of us, ready to intervene if the old man dies of hunger or if the innocent man is dis-possessed of his wealth?'

'Do you not believe so?' he said, looking at me with surprise.

'I should like to believe it,' I said, 'but I confess that if I look round me I cannot see the results of this benevolent wisdom. I see the wicked triumphant, the ambitious rewarded, the assassin firm in the saddle, the just man stricken with hideous maladies. I see the coquette surrounded by subjected men and the virtuous woman spurned.'

'You think that you see these things,' he said, 'because you attach too much importance to the present. . . . I too, when young, was indignant when my enemy got the better of me by intrigue. . . . In those days I was eager to defend myself, to give battle in my turn, to denounce falsehood. . . . Afterwards I understood better the spectacle of life. . . . I saw that the wheel revolves, that by waiting long enough and without raising my finger, my enemy is en-tangled in his own falsehoods, totters, and falls. . . .'

'What! Will you maintain that you have never beheld the guilty dying unpunished? Then this Morocco of yours is very different from the lands which I have observed! In Europe, in America . . .'

'Excuse me,' said M. Cherkaouen. (An old merchant stopped him to sprinkle liquid from a flask on him, and

again we were surrounded with the scent of orange flowers.) 'Excuse me. . . . Certainly, I too have seen the wicked die before their chastisement. But I know that God will punish their children, or the children of their children, or the tenth generation . . . . And above all I know that it is vain for me to concern myself therewith, for man does not alter that which is written.'

'*Balek!*' cried the donkeymen. At the entrance to the *souks*, in the square of Djem-el-Fna, five blind negroes were asking alms. One of them stood alone in front of the group, singing a plaintive phrase over and over again. 'Amen' answered the four others, and then the chant began again. The passers-by gave. M. Cherkaouen bade us farewell. Crouching motionless along the walls, all thought banished from their minds, men were sleeping away their lives, with open eyes.

\* \* \* \* \*

'God will provide,' I thought. (The Arab story-teller was talking in the centre of a ring of white cloth.) 'Man does not alter that which is written. . . . Ah, how sure of that teaching he seems! What quiet certainty he infuses into his life! But we, the children of Europe and America, are incapable of this passivity; we do alter the things that are written; we do not accept God's universe and God's justice; we look ahead, we calculate, we arrange, we prophesy. . . . Yes,' my thoughts ran on, 'yes, we prophesy, we make mistakes, we act, we undo our own actions, we produce, and our products overwhelm us with poverty. . . . Are we any wiser than these merchants who buy women and carpets and enjoy the strength of the body whilst it is still young?'

With their large eyes wide open in their heads of antique bronzes, some *chleuh* dancers moved this way and that, tense, working towards some invisible spasm. 'Man does not alter that which is written. . . .' I pondered. Who was it who had made almost the same remark to me in a totally

different setting? 'Man does not alter that which is written. . . .' Yes, at the door of a house in Normandy, looking down a sheltered valley; a hill closed it in; horses were galloping under the gnarled apple trees; the silence could be felt against the distant hum of a motor. 'There is nothing to be done,' the banker said to me. . . . 'Rash men must be left to perish,' the banker said to me. . . . 'Whatever one attempts,' he said, 'prolongs the crisis by hindering the action of economic laws.' And he stooped to pluck a sprig of honeysuckle.

'Nature must take her own course,' said the financier. 'Man does not alter that which is written,' said M. Chérelaouen. *A hectic drumming stirred the dancers on. The cows were slowly turning beside the white barriers. In misfortune the wisdom of the sedentary and the wisdom of the nomad joined hands. The Occidental, tamer of natural forces, accepted for a time the universe of God. On the dusty square a crouching people unconcernedly awaited their destiny.*

## ECONOMIC RELATIVITY

IF, in the year 1240, the peasants of Normandy or Brittany could have had described to them the institutions which seem to us so natural to-day—the independent farmer, the château with no armed men, the administration of justice in the name of the people by regular and official judges—the picture would have surprised them to the point of incredulity.

If, before the War, and apart from socialist or communist circles, an essayist had discussed the chances of the survival of capitalism, he would not have been taken seriously. The régime of private property had every appearance of being one of the necessary outcomes of human nature. A captain of industry had no more doubts about his rights over his own factory than a feudal lord of the twelfth century had about his rights over his fief.

Will capitalism and private property go to join feudalism and seignorial rights in the unfamiliar museums of archaic institutions? A whole political party believes so, and one nation, Russia, is already exploring a new economic system. Has she succeeded? Is it not possible that capitalism, before giving place, like every human creation, to other self-engendered forms, still has years or centuries of vigour within itself? Is it a young institution overcome by growing-pains, or a crumbling system already doomed? What should the capitalist states do to remedy those infirmities, which could so easily become mortal?—Such are a few of the questions which, in my opinion, every enquiring mind should face in the year 1932.

(1)

One certainty is, that none of these questions would be so pressing were it not for the Russian experiment. Not that it is easy at the present moment to give an honest judgment regarding that experiment. It is one of the most curious phenomena of our time that impartial men (or men believing themselves to be so) find it impossible to obtain trustworthy information regarding conditions in the new Russia. The existence of a censorship casts suspicion on the testimony of Russians and even on that of foreign correspondents resident in Russia. The shortness of their visits, their ignorance of the language, the supervision of their guides, deprive the accounts of travellers of much of their value, and leave them almost completely at the mercy of the preconceived ideas, favourable or otherwise, which they were anxious to verify when they set out.

In spite of, or possibly because of, this ignorance, Soviet Russia stimulates the imagination. We do not know whether it is successful, but we cannot be blind to the fact that it endures. Its adroit leaders are ingenious in building up an impression of success. Their Five Year Plan was a fine discovery. That formula contains a blend of exactness and mystery which is at once perturbing and satisfying to the mind. Moreover, it is not merely a formula. The capitalist engineers and business men who have visited Russia within the last year have come back, not converted, but surprised. Builders of factories themselves, they cannot withhold admiration from those gigantic examples which are being constructed over there. True, building is not difficult in itself: the problem is not to create a tool-kit, but to use it under conditions of productivity and wages superior to those of the capitalist régimes, and it is not proved that this problem will be solved. No matter, viewed at a distance, the effect produced is striking.



For over two years the capitalist countries have been passing through a formidable crisis. The machine seems to be out of order. The numbers of unemployed rise, and the necessity of providing for them forces the various countries to live on their reserves. It is only natural that communism appears as a refuge to two groups of human beings. One of these consists of the unfortunate people who have lost their fortune or their work, and lay the blame for their personal misfortune on 'the system'. The other consists of the intellectuals, who are startled by the inability of the capitalists to secure a reasonable organization of production and distribution, and are attracted by the obvious logical strictness of the Russian organization. To both classes of malcontents the U.S.S.R. provides a nucleus of crystallization. The existence of a communist Russia endows the crises of over-production and unemployment with a new character, at once deep-seated and dangerous. But it is none the less certain that since the War these crises in themselves have apparently assumed a more serious and widespread character than formerly. We must seek the reason why.

(ii)

The property-owner's right to do as he pleases with what belongs to him (saving respect for law), and his right to unlimited aggrandizement of his property, are part of a very old-established system which, all in all, has produced wonderful results. Nearly everywhere, and throughout the whole of recorded history, human civilization has rested on this foundation. The hope of gain; the will to increase one's power, the desire to bequeath it to one's children, have produced an energy of toil and a wisdom of saving resulting in that prodigious accumulation of capital which, under the form of houses, cultivated fields, live-stock, furniture, objects of art, and every other form of wealth, constitutes the frame-

work of our spiritual civilization. At the present moment one may be the champion or the adversary of capitalism; it seems to me that an historian can hardly fail to recognize the greatness of its effects in the past.

In the nineteenth century, and then in the twentieth, the system of private property was profoundly altered by the development of machinery and the concentration of great industries. That story has often been told, and here I wish only to pick out two points:

(a) A new feudalism was created by the great profits made during this period. Family businesses were handed down like feudal holdings in dynasties of manufacturers or traders. Millions of workers accepted the suzerainty of the masters who provided them with work. Until 1880 (and even, in many countries, until 1900) the working classes in practice left political power in the hands of these Notables. The heroic figures of banking, trade, and industry engaged in Homeric battles in which defeat meant bankruptcy, sometimes suicide. As with all the warfares of the castles, the cottages paid a heavy price. But the public likes the tournament, and there are great masters just as once there were great lords. In the United States, a country where the feudalism of business is still strong and primitive, the populace, until the last great slump and notwithstanding frequent wounds from the splinters, admired the way in which the great jousts of Wall Street handled their lances.

(b) The development of certain industries has been so rapid that the isolated capitalist has no longer been able to find in his personal profits the new capital so essential to him. Whence has come the flourishing of the joint-stock company, with a total transformation of the nature of property. In Balzac's day a man like old Grandet owned poplars, fields, houses, gold, and, as one part of his fortune, State bonds. At the present day a Parisian wage-earner will own

shares in an oil concern with its head office in Amsterdam, in a copper mine which he thinks is in Spain but is really in the Argentine, in a rubber plantation with its trees being tapped in Java or Sumatra. This participation of small investors in great concerns has induced the superficial observer to talk of a democratization of property. But this democracy actually resembles political democracy only inasmuch as they are both plutocracies. These great businesses are administered by a small number of men who remain all-powerful, who settle contracts and fix dividends, and who are freed from all serious control by the very multiplicity of their shareholders.

The consequences of these transformations of private property have not been happy. The results are: discontent on the part of the small capitalist, who has lost the sense of security and confidence; the anarchy of a feudalistic society in which, as everybody strives only to develop his own undertakings without regard to the general requirements of the market, over-production is fatal; the accumulation of vast revenues in the hands of a few men who cannot spend them to satisfy their own needs, and divert these forces from the normal course of the economic cycle, using them to multiply still further means of production which are already too numerous; periodical crises, perhaps inevitable, but the magnitude of which might have been regulated by a more intelligent control over speculation and production; and lastly, unemployment, a grave and automatic consequence of over-production.

A diagnosis of the evils engendered by leaving such complex machinery to its own devices was possible, and was made, in the nineteenth century. But the symptoms then seemed harmless, and indeed negligible. Widening markets had caused the illusion that a continuous expansion of production was possible. By closing a large number of these markets, by industrializing nations which hitherto had only

been purchasers, by multiplying the customs barriers of Europe, the War made the oscillations of trade so extremely wide that it became difficult for bourgeois civilization to withstand them. Two attitudes remain possible. The first is to think that these evils are not a necessary outcome of the régime of private property, and that it would become once more efficacious if certain modifications were made in the formulas of our economics. The second, that of the Russians, is to declare that every capitalist society must necessarily produce these harmful results, and that the sole remedy is communism.

(iii)

What elements of strength does communism contain? In the first place, it is an economic dictatorship. In the capitalist world we have had experience of such methods. It is often forgotten that the first great experiment in international socialist economics was made by the Allied Powers between 1915 and 1918. During that period the world's shipping fleets were controlled by the Interallied Shipping Board, and in America the War Industries Board, under the direction of Bernard Baruch, was an economic dictatorship. The results were amazing. Why? Because when the perpetual conflict of individual interests was effaced by the general interest, anarchy was replaced by something approximating to order.

And how were such a renunciation and self-denial then obtained from rebellious human nature? The powerful sentiment of patriotism had sealed the lips of envy, vanity and covetousness. A set of mystical values had been set up, and the individual, bowing before a force greater than himself, accepted the sacrifice. The second positive factor in communism is that it likewise puts forward a set of mystical values. It is blended with patriotism. Russia is playing a

hand against the world, and many Russians who do not believe in communism are nevertheless eager to see the triumph of their country. But to members of the party the active force is a really communistic mysticism—the total abandonment of the individual to a task and to hopes which are far greater than himself. It is this mysticism which enables a harsh and exigent dictatorship to endure. The strength of the régime appears to lie in military or police forces, and in fact it is so; but no forcible régime lasts any length of time if it is not upheld by a belief. In the communist party, and particularly amongst the youth, that essential faith exists.

Would it suffice? I do not think so. The number of individuals capable of real sacrifice and selflessness is certainly not negligible, but it cannot be great enough to keep a whole country toiling. When one reads the novels of present-day Russia (for instance, Pilniak's fine book, 'The Volga Flows to the Caspian Sea'), one sees how disinterestedness is strengthened by more human passions. I had always wondered what motive springs there could be in the communist economy, to replace for the common man (and it must be admitted that in Russia as elsewhere the common man exists) that desire for gain which is the great motive power of the capitalist economy. They have been made plain to me in Pilniak's book, as also in that of Calvin B. Hoover, and more recently by Stalin's speech on necessary inequalities.

To start with, the idea of gain is not entirely ruled out: 'It is inadmissible,' says Stalin, 'that a locomotive driver should be paid like a copying clerk.' When the notion of profit is set aside, that of ambition takes its place, and produces almost identical results. A man in Russia who is a good technician can become a foreman, a factory manager, or an engineer, and these functions have corresponding standards of living, a type of lodging and a prestige amongst

women, which are superior to those of the common workman. Like Pilnink, Calvin B. Hoover lets one see that, in Russia, a part equal to that of keenness for profit in the capitalist world is played by political and economic intrigues, manoeuvres for self-advancement, rule-bearing designed to undermine a superior who bars one's road to promotion. Here are to be seen once again the instincts always set free by fanaticism, disguised under a mask of virtue. Stalin's communists are like Cromwell's Puritans. Now, Puritanism and ambition are perhaps even more opposed to the harmonious existence of a society than the love of money, an impersonal and interchangeable form of power. I am doubtful whether humanity would stand to gain much by substituting the god Power for the god Money, or calumny for competition. I don't believe so.

But another and loftier sentiment is evident in the novels of the new Russia. That is, the happiness born of action. The pioneer, the man who, with unresting activity, shapes virgin nature with his own hands, has at all times been a happy man. For two whole centuries America experienced the optimism of the pioneer. After America, Russia is giving free scope to the Men Who Would be Kings. An article by an American engineer in Russian employment has expressed this feeling extremely well. 'I am not a communist,' he said, 'all these doctrines are meaningless to me. All I know is that here I can build the biggest electric power-station, and the finest. What do I care for the rest of it all? I am happy.' Read Ilin's short primer, 'Moscow Has a Plan,' which the Soviets distribute to their school children, and you will see there the Five Year Plan presented as a great and heroic adventure, in a style reminiscent at once of Rudyard Kipling and Walt Whitman. It is only natural that by means of such texts the enthusiasm of young men should have been successfully kindled.

## (iv)

Will this mystic enthusiasm prove lasting? Here, as in all things, one should beware of the dangerous profession of prophet. But it is a fine exercise for the wits to study Possibilities. One of these would be the swift disappearance of communism. The Five Year Plan would collapse, the Russian workers would weary of a self-denial proved to be fruitless, and would drive out their masters. This solution does not strike me as likely. The Five Year Plan will not lead Russia into a state of perfect happiness, and will leave the Russian worker with a status which will still be inferior to that of the French or American worker. But it will better his status, and the change will be great enough, with the aid of faith, to make it easy to obtain the allegiance of the Russian masses to a new Plan, which it will be prudent this time to set up for ten or even fifteen years.

It is possible that in the course of these fifteen or twenty years the Soviets will win a good deal of ground from the capitalist states, unless the latter transform their methods. The Soviets are working in a new country, where needs are on a vast scale and the natural resources immense; technical competence is afforded them by German and American engineers; they exercise absolute power. By imposing privations on their people they are building up a reserve capital more quickly than the capitalist would. There is no visible reason why they should not construct a great industrial civilization. The Pharaohs erected the Pyramids, a much more absurd undertaking, and their peoples did not rebel. Mediocre though the early output of communist production may be, it is possible that, doubly aided by foreign collaboration and a coercive system, the Russians might be able, after a series of partial checks, to correct their mistakes.

Russia's real difficulties will start with success. 'Nothing

fails like success' Let us assume that in thirty years the Soviet régime provides its subjects with a mode of living equal or superior to that of the workers, or even the lower middle-class, in capitalist countries. It is natural then to suppose that the following phenomena will be observed.

(a) The driving force of communist mysticism will lose strength, because all human emotions become enfeebled when they lose the glamour of novelty, because victory will put an end to the thrill of struggle and because the desire to build and create will no longer find satisfaction. The pioneer clears the land, and it is his destiny to abolish the very background, the very privation, which gives birth to his happiness. The day comes when he replaces hostile nature by the human hive, and on that day he is at once the victor and the dispossessed. The Russians of 1960 will know the same boredom as the Americans of 1927.

(b) Russia will doubtless try, as America tried, to prolong the Pioneer period. And then she in her turn will experience over-production. She will find export difficult, because other nations will be bound to protect their own workers. But how, the objector may ask, can over-production arise under a communist régime? Cannot the Soviets increase rations to an unlimited extent, raise the average standard of living, shorten hours of work? And we must loyally admit that this indeed could constitute the superiority of the communist régime over an unreformed capitalist system. But it is not true at this moment, because Russia is in need, and will long remain so, of creating an implement of capital.

(c) A lasting improvement of the standard of life would mean the rebirth of a bourgeoisie. The Soviets will be led to distribute so many various products that they will have to grant their wage earners the right of choice amongst the objects offered and a free disposal of their earnings. From such a right the path towards savings, and then wealth,



seems easy, and the slope will be steep. About the end of the twentieth century Russia will discover private property, which will appear as a great revolutionary novelty. Property will bring the rebirth of capitalism, though different from the old form. The cycle will be complete. This at least is one of the possible progressions of the world's history; it is not perhaps the one which will actually take place. But if it be over-ingenuous to believe that capitalism is untouchable, it is no less so to regard communism as a true religion, a logical and perfect form in which human economy will be crystallized for all time.

It is also surprisingly confused thinking to set up individualism against socialism, capitalism against communism, as if one were dealing with clear concepts with well-defined outlines, whereas the reality is complex and shifting, and historical evolution makes human societies oscillate between one system and the other, without being able to stop at either. If our epoch is capable of contributing an original philosophy, it is one of absolute relativity. It is not immoral to be a capitalist, it is not criminal to be a communist; but it would be intelligent to admit that every doctrine is baneful if it is rigid. There is no such thing as economic truth: or rather, every moment has its own economic truth. Just as the scientist adjusts an hypothesis to take account of his experiment, or as the wise military leader accepts the lesson of hard fact, so the economic rulers should hold a doctrine only for the provisional co-ordination of their actions. Capitalism is capable of fashioning the economy of a revolution, and I should like it to do so. But only a process of self-transformation will save it.

## THE EARTH DWELLERS

ANOTHER FRAGMENT FROM A UNIVERSAL HISTORY  
PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF \* \* \* IN 1992.

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BY the end of 1970 friendly relations had been established between the Earth and most of the major planets, and terrestrial scientists became anxious to compare their own hypotheses and doctrines with those of their colleagues in other worlds. But such comparisons were often difficult, because, as is well known, the eminent physicists of Venus, Jupiter and Mars had no perception of either light or sound, and lived in a world of radiations of which we had hitherto been quite ignorant. But the theory of sensorial equivalents made rapid progress, and at the date of writing (1992) it may be said that we are capable of transposing every language of the planetary system into Earth language—except Saturnian.

One of the most interesting discoveries due to this new philology was that of books written about ourselves, the Earth-Dwellers, by the scientists of foreign planets. Mankind had not the slightest idea that for millions of years past he had been under observation, thanks to instruments very much more powerful than his own, by the naturalists of Venus, Mars, and even Uranus. Terrestrial science lagged far behind the science of neighbouring bodies, and as our organs were insensitive to the radiations utilized by these

observers, it was impossible for us to know that, in the most secret moments of our lives, we were sometimes within the field of vision of a celestial ultra-microscope.

Nowadays these works can be consulted by any scholar in the library of the League of Planets. They provide most commendable reading for young men eager to devote themselves to the learned sciences not only because of their great intrinsic interest, but also because of the sense of humility which they cannot fail to evoke. To observe the incredible errors made by beings of such high intelligence and so wonderfully equipped for research, one cannot refrain from reverting to a number of our own human affirmations, wondering whether we have not observed plants and animals very much as the Martians observed us.

One case in particular strikes us as worthy of careful study: that of the Uranian scholar A.E. 17, who published his book, 'Man and His Life', in 1959.<sup>1</sup> Until the War that book was the standard work not only in Uranus, but also, in translations, amongst the inhabitants of Venus and Mars. To ourselves it is readily accessible because, alone amongst our fellow-planetaries, the Uranians share with us the sense of sight, which makes their vocabulary approximate closely to ours. Moreover, the experiments carried out by A.E. 17 were such as completely to upset the Earth throughout a period of six months; and we have access to the terrestrial account of these events in the newspapers and memoirs of the time.

We propose here:

- (a) To describe briefly a few of the events noted on our own planet in the year 1954;
- (b) to show what interpretation the eminent A.E. 17 put on his own experiments.

<sup>1</sup> Original Uranian edition, 1959. First terrestrial edition, 1982.

*The Mysterious Springtime.*

In the month of March, 1954, numerous observers throughout the northern hemisphere gave surprising reports of atmospheric conditions. Notwithstanding fine and cool weather, storms of the utmost violence were bursting suddenly within strictly limited zones. Ships' captains and aeroplane pilots reported to the Central Meteorological Bureau that their compasses had for several seconds behaved quite wildly for no conceivable reason. In several places, under a clear sky, people saw what appeared to be the shadow of a huge cloud passing over the ground, although no such cloud was visible. The newspapers published interviews with the eminent meteorologists, who explained that they had anticipated this phenomenon, which was due to sunspots and would come to an end with the equinoctial tides. But the advent of the equinox only brought stranger happenings in its wake.

*The 'Hyde Park Hill' Incident.*

On the third Sunday in April, the crowds of men and women listening to the open-air orators on their pitch at Marble Arch, suddenly saw passing overhead the shadow of an invisible obstacle mysteriously interposed between the Earth and the sun. A few seconds later, from the Park railings to a point some three or four hundred yards inside the Park, there occurred an abrupt upheaval of the ground. Trees were uprooted and pedestrians tumbled over and buried, whilst those who were on the edge of the disturbed area were dumbfounded to observe that a great funnel at least three hundred feet deep had been scooped out, the soil from which had been thrown up to form a hill of corresponding height.

A policeman, giving evidence next day at the inquest on victims, said: 'It all happened just as if a giant had been

wielding a spade in the Park. Yes, it was just like someone using a spade, because the outer edge of the cavity was trim and smooth, while the edge on the side where the hill came consisted of crumbling loose soil, with half-cut heads and bodies protruding from it.'

Over three hundred citizens walking in the Park had been buried alive. Some who had only been covered with a light layer of earth managed to extricate themselves with some difficulty. Some, too, suddenly lost their senses and rushed down the steep slope of the new hill uttering dreadful shrieks. On the summit of the mound there appeared the upright figure of a Salvation Army preacher, Colonel R. W. Ward, who, with astonishing presence of mind, still shaking the dirt from his hair and clothing, began to bellow: 'I told you so, brothers! You have sacrificed to false gods, and now the Lord God is angered with his people, and the hand of the Lord God has fallen heavy upon us. . . .'

And indeed this inexplicable event bore such a likeness to certain divine punishments as described in Holy Writ, that sceptics amongst the bystanders were instantly converted, and began lives of practising religion to which they have from that moment been steadfast.

The episode enabled people to appreciate the virtues of the Metropolitan Police. Three members of the Force were amongst the victims, but a dozen others, arriving instantly on the scene, set to work on digging with great courage. Telephone messages were sent out at once to the military authorities and fire stations, and General Clarkwell, the Commissioner of Police, took command of the rescue forces, and within four hours Hyde Park had resumed its normal appearance. Unfortunately, the dead numbered two hundred.

Scientists gave the most varied explanations of the disaster. The theory of an earthquake, the only reasonable one if the supernatural were ruled out, did not seem plausible,

for no shock had been recorded by any seismograph. The public were fairly well satisfied when the experts informed them that it *had* been an earthquake, but an earthquake of a very special sort which they had labelled a 'vertical-montiform seismic variant'.

*The House in the Avenue Victor Hugo.*

The Hyde Park incident was followed by a considerable number of similar occurrences, which attracted much less public attention because they caused no human fatalities. But at different points these strange mounds were seen taking shape with the same swiftness, each of them bordered by a precipice with sheer, clean-cut fall. In certain places these hills are still in existence: as for instance the one in the plain of Ayen in Périgord, that of Roznov in Wallachia, and that of Itapura in Brazil.

But the mysterious spade which was thus apparently wielded on bare land was now, alas, to attack human erections.

About midday on April 24, a strange noise, compared by some who heard it to that of a whizzing blade, by others to that of an extremely fine and powerful water-jet, astonished the passers-by in the region of Paris bounded approximately by the Arc de Triomphe, the Avenue de la Grande Armée, the Avenue Marceau, and the Avenue Henri Martin.

People happening to be opposite the building known as 66 Avenue Victor Hugo saw an enormous oblique cleft appear across it; the house was shaken by two or three tremors, and suddenly the whole of the top storey, occupied by the servants' rooms, seemed to crumble away as if under powerful pressure. The frenzied inhabitants appeared at the windows and on the balconies. Fortunately, although the building was literally cut in two, it did not collapse. Half-way up the staircase the rescuers came upon the fissure produced by

the invisible instrument. It looked exactly as if a blade had cut through the wood of the steps, the carpet, the metal balustrade, following a line at right-angles to these. Everything in its path—furniture, carpets, pictures, books—had been cut in two with a clean stroke, very neatly. By a miracle nobody was injured. A girl sleeping on the third floor found her bed sliced obliquely across; but the cut had just missed her. She had felt no pain, but did experience a shock like that of a weak electric battery.

In this case, too, there were numerous explanations. The word 'seismic' was again produced. Certain newspapers accused the architect and proprietor of the building of having used faulty materials in its construction. A communist deputy raised the question in the Chamber.

### *The Transportation Phenomena.*

Like the Hyde Park occurrence, the accident in the Avenue Victor Hugo was followed by several almost identical in kind, which we shall not recount, but which ought, as we now see, to have convinced observant minds of a hidden will engaged in the furtherance of a definite plan. In numerous countries, houses, great and small, were sun-dered by an invisible force. Several farmhouses, one in Massachusetts, another in Denmark, another in Spain, were raised into the air, and dropped back on to the ground, smashed to pieces with their inhabitants. The French Building in New York was cut in two. About fifty men and women met their deaths in these occurrences, but as they took place in very different countries, each isolated case being responsible only for a few victims, and also as nobody could provide an explanation, very little was said about them.

It was different with the subsequent series of happenings, which kept the whole planet in a ferment of excitement throughout May and June, 1954. The first victim was a

young negress of Hartford, Connecticut, who was leaving her employers' house one morning when a postman, the sole witness of the accident, saw her suddenly soar into the air uttering terrible cries. She rose to a height of three hundred feet and then crashed to the ground. The postman declared that he had seen no aerial apparatus of any sort overhead.

The second case of 'transportation' was that of a customs official at Calais, who was also seen rising vertically and disappearing at high speed towards the English coast. A few minutes later he was found on the Dover cliffs dead, but with no visible injuries. He looked as if he had been laid gently down on the ground, he was blue, like a man hanged.

Then began the period of the so-called 'successful transportations'. The first victim to arrive living at the end of his journey was an aged beggar, who was seized by an invisible hand when he was begging for alms in front of Notre Dame, and ten minutes later was deposited in the middle of Piccadilly Circus at the feet of a stupefied policeman. He had not suffered at all, and had the impression of having been conveyed in a closed cabin to which neither wind nor light could penetrate. Eye witnesses of his departure had observed that he became invisible immediately after he was raised from the ground.

For several weeks longer these 'transportations' continued. Once they were known to be quite harmless, they were regarded as rather comical. The choice of the invisible hand seemed to be completely whimsical. Once it was a little girl of Denver, Colorado, who found herself set down in a Russian steppe, another time a Saragossa dentist turned up in Stockholm. The 'transportation' which caused most talk was that of the venerable President of the French Senate, M. Paul Reynaud, who was picked up in the Luxembourg gardens and deposited on the shore of Lake Ontario. He



took the opportunity of making a journey through Canada, was triumphantly welcomed back at the Bois de Boulogne station, and this unsought publicity was probably largely responsible for his election as President of the Republic, in 1956.

It should be noted that, after their journeys, the subjects of 'transportation' were smeared with a reddish liquid that stained their clothing, for no ascertainable reason. This was the only inconvenience of these otherwise harmless adventures. After about two months they ceased, to be followed by a new and still stranger series which began with the famous episode of the 'Two Couples'.

*The 'Two Couples' Episode.*

The first of the two famous couples was a French one, living in a small house close to Paris, in Neuilly. The husband, Jacques Martin, was on the teaching staff of the Lycée Pasteur, a sporting and scholarly young man, and the author of a remarkable biographical study on Paul Morand. He and his wife had four children. On July 3, towards midnight, Mme Martin had just fallen asleep when she heard that steam-like whistling which we have already mentioned, felt a slight shaking, and had the impression of being very rapidly raised into the air. Opening her eyes, she was stupefied to see that the pale light of the moon was flooding her room, a whole wall of which had vanished, that she was lying on the edge of a bed cut in two, and that on her left hand, where her husband had been lying a few seconds before, there was a bottomless gulf, above which the stars were glittering. She flung herself in terror towards the still solid edge of the bed, and was amazed (and at the same time reassured) to find that it did not wobble, although it was left with only two legs. Mme Martin felt that she was rising no higher, but was being moved very fast in a straight line; then she

was made aware, by a feeling in the heart like that which one has in a lift descending too quickly, that she was dropping. Imagining that her fall would end with a crash, she had already closed her eyes in anticipation of the final shock. But it was gentle and elastic, and when she looked round her, she could see nothing. The room was dark. Her own narrative continues

'I put out my arm; everything was solid. The abyss had apparently closed up again. I called my husband's name, thinking that I had been passing through a nightmare and feeling anxious to tell him about it. My groping hand felt a man's arm, and I heard a strong unknown voice say in English 'Oh, my dear, what a fright you gave me!' I started back and wanted to turn on the light, but I could not find the electric switch. 'What's wrong?' said the unknown. He himself turned on a light. We both uttered simultaneous cries. In front of me was a fair-haired young Englishman, with a small short nose, rather short-sighted, and still half-asleep, in blue pyjamas. Down the middle of the bed ran a crack; sheets, mattress and bolster were all cut in two. There was a difference of three or four inches in the level of the two portions of the bed.

'When my bedfellow had recovered his wits, his demeanour in these difficult circumstances gave me a high opinion of the British race. After a short but very excusable moment of confusion, his correctness was as complete and natural as if we had been in a drawing-room. I spoke his language and told him my name. He told me that his was John Graham. The place we were in was Richmond. Looking round, I saw that the whole of one half of my own room had accompanied me. I recognized my window with its cherry-coloured curtains, the large photograph of my husband, the small table with books beside my bed, and even my watch on top of my books. The other half, Mr. Graham's, was unknown to me.

On the bedside table there were a portrait of a very pretty woman, photographs of children, some magazines, and a box of cigarettes. John Graham looked at me for a very long time, examining the background against which I had appeared to him, and then said with the utmost seriousness: "What are you doing here?" I explained that I knew nothing about it, and pointing to the large portrait, I said: "This is my husband." Pointing likewise, he answered: "This is my wife." She was delightful, and the disturbing thought came to me that she was perhaps at that very moment in the arms of Jacques. "Do you suppose," I asked him, "that half of your house has been transported to France at the same time as half of ours has come here?"—"Why?" he said. He annoyed me. Why, indeed? I knew nothing about it at all. . . . Because this affair had a sort of natural symmetry of its own.

"A queer business," he said, shaking his head. "How can it be possible?"—"It isn't possible," I said, "but it has happened."

At this moment cries were heard apparently coming from upstairs, and the same thought struck us: "The children?" John Graham jumped out of bed and ran barefoot towards a door, the door of *his* half. He opened it, and I could hear cries, the sound of coughing, and then the Englishman's powerful voice mingling oaths with words of comfort. I made haste to rise, and looked in the mirror. My face looked just as usual. I then noticed that my night-dress was *décolletée* and looked round for my kimono; but I remembered having hung it in the half of the room which had stayed behind. Standing there in front of the mirror, I heard a pitiable voice behind me.

"The cries in the nursery were redoubled, weeping and appeals mingling with them.

"Come and help me," he said in a beseeching tone.

' "Of course I will . . . but have you got your wife's dressing-gown, and slippers?"

' "Oh, yes, of course. . . ."

'Handing me his own dressing-gown he showed me the way to the nursery. The children were splendid. I managed to soothe them. It was the youngest, a lovely fair baby, who seemed to be suffering most. I comforted him as best I could, and took his hand; he accepted my presence.

'In this way we spent a couple of hours in that room, both in a state of mental anguish, he thinking of his wife, and I of my husband.

'I asked if we could not telephone to the police. He tried, and found that his telephone had been cut off; his wireless aerial had also been cut; the house must have been looking extremely odd. When dawn appeared, Mr. Graham went out. The children had fallen asleep. In a few minutes he returned for me, saying that really the front of the house was well worth looking at. And it was! The unknown contriver of this miracle had evidently wanted to pick two houses of the same height divided in the same way, and he had succeeded; but the styles were so different that the combined effect took one's breath away. Our house at Neuilly was of brick, very plain, its tall windows framed with stone; the English house was a small black and white cottage, with wide bow-windows. The juxtaposition of these two utterly different halves formed a most ludicrous ensemble—like a Harlequin of Picasso's.

'I urged Mr. Graham to put on his clothes and send off a telegram to France, to find out what had happened to his wife. He told me that the telegraph office did not open till eight o'clock. He was a stolid creature, apparently incapable of conceiving that in such peculiar circumstances, one could infringe regulations and knock up the telegraph-clerk. I shook him energetically, but in vain. All I could

get out of him was: "It only opens at eight." In the end, about seven o'clock, just when he was going out, we saw a policeman arriving. He was gazing at the house in amazement, and had brought a telegram from the head of the Paris police, asking if I was there and announcing that Mrs. John Graham was safe and sound at Neuilly.'

It is not worth while continuing the quotation of this narrative *in extenso*. Suffice it to say that Mrs. Graham tended Mme Martin's children as devotedly as the latter did the little English ones, that both couples declared themselves charmed by the amiability of their companions in adventure, and that both households remained close friends to their dying days. Mme Martin was still alive ten years ago, in her family home at Chambourcy (Seine-et-Oise).

The space allotted to this chapter in the general plan of this volume does not allow us to recount the analogous adventures which astonished mankind throughout that month of August, 1954.

The series of 'sliced houses' was even longer than that of the 'transportations'. Over one hundred couples were interchanged in this way, and the changes became a favourite theme with novelists and film-writers. They continued an element of whimsical sensuality which was much to the public's taste. Besides, it was diverting to see (as it really happened) a queen waking up in a policeman's bed, and a ballet-girl in that of the President of the United States. Then the series stopped dead, and gave place to another. It looked as if the mysterious beings who amused themselves by disturbing the lives of humans were capricious, and quick to tire of their games.

### *The Caging.*

Early in September, the hand whose power was by now

known to all the world fell upon some of the finest minds on its surface. A dozen men, nearly all chemists or physicists, men of the highest achievement, were simultaneously abstracted from different points amongst the civilized countries and transported to a clearing in the Forest of Fontainebleau.

A group of lads who had come there in the early hours of the morning to climb the rocks, noticed some old men wandering forlornly amongst the trees. Seeing that they were in difficulties, the young men tried to approach them to offer help, but were taken aback to find themselves suddenly checked by some transparent but unsurmountable resistance. They tried to find a way round the obstacle, but after making a complete circle round the clearing they realized that it was completely ringed by an invisible rampart. One of the scientists was recognized by a few of the youths as their professor, and they called him by name. He did not seem to hear them. Sound could not penetrate the barrier. The celebrated personages were there like caged beasts.

Before very long they seemed to accept the situation. They were observed to be lying down in the sunlight; and then, drawing pieces of paper from their pockets they began scribbling mathematical formulæ and arguing quite cheerfully. One of the young onlookers went off to inform the authorities, and by noon many curious spectators were beginning to come on the scene. By noon the scientists were showing signs of anxiety; they were all of advanced years, and they dragged themselves rather wearily to the edge of the ring, where, seeing that their voices were not reaching anyone, they made signs that they should be supplied with food.

A few officers were present, and one of them had what appeared to be the capital notion of supplying the un-

fortunate men with supplies by aeroplane. A couple of hours later the drone of a motor was heard, and the pilot, passing skilfully over the circular clearing, dropped some packages of food exactly over the centre. But unfortunately, about sixty feet above the ground the packages were seen to stop in their fall, bounce back and then were left suspended in mid-air. The cage had a roof composed of the same invisible radiations.

Towards nightfall the old men became desperate, signalling that they were dying of hunger and dreaded the night chills. The anguished onlookers could do nothing for them. Were they going to witness the perishing of this remarkable assemblage of great intellects?

In the pale light of the dawn it was at first thought that the situation had not changed, but closer examination showed that quite a new setting had appeared in the centre of the 'cage'. The invisible hand had staged things so that the packages dropped by the aeroplane were now suspended at the end of rope about fifteen feet above the ground, whilst alongside this rope hung another which actually reached the ground. To any young man it would have been an easy matter to swing himself up and reach the packages that held the hopes of safety. But unhappily there was little likelihood that any of these venerable men of learning could undertake this difficult gymnastic feat. They were seen walking round the ropes and gauging their strength, but none of them ventured further.

A whole day went by in this way. Night fell. Gradually the curious throng melted away. About midnight one young student took it into his head to ascertain whether the barrier of radiations still held. To his great surprise he found nothing barring his way, walked straight on, and uttered a cry of triumph. The cruel powers which had made men their toys for two whole days were consenting to spare their vic-

times. The scientists were fed and warmed and none of them succumbed.

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Such are the chief facts which distinguished this period, at the time inexplicable, but which we now know to have corresponded to a period of experiments on the planet Uranus. We shall now give a few extracts, in our opinion the most interesting from the book of the famous A E 17.

The reader will understand that we have been obliged to find terrestrial equivalents for the Uranian words, and the translation is only approximate. Uranian time consists of years very much longer than ours and wherever possible we have made a transposition into terrestrial time. Furthermore to designate ourselves the Uranians use a word which signifies roughly, 'apterous bipeds', but this is needlessly complicated and we have in most places substituted the words 'men' or 'Earth-dwellers'. Similarly we have translated the queer word by which they designated our cities by the word 'manheaps', which gives in our view a fair suggestion of the associations of analogous ideas. Finally, the reader should not overlook the fact that the Uranian, although endowed like ourselves with the sense of sight, is ignorant of sound. Uranians communicate with each other by means of a special organ consisting of a series of small coloured lamps which flash on and off. Observing that men were without this organ, and being unable to imagine speech, the Uranian naturally supposed that we were incapable of communicating our ideas to each other.

Here we can offer only a few brief excerpts from the book by A E 17 on 'Man and His Life'. But we strongly advise the student to read the book in its entirety, there is an excellent school edition published with appendix and notes by Professor Fischer of Peking.

\* \* \* \* \*



## MAN AND HIS LIFE

*By*

A.E. 17.

WHEN the surface of the small planets, particularly that of the Earth, is examined through an ordinary telescope, large stains may be noticed, more streaky in texture than those formed by a lake or ocean. If these stains are observed over a long enough period, they are seen to expand throughout several terrestrial centuries, pass through a period of maximum size, and then diminish, or even in some cases disappear. Many observers have thought that they were related to some unhealthy condition of the soil. And indeed nothing could be more like the development and reabsorption of a tumour in an organism. But with the invention of the ultratelemicroscope it has been possible to detect that we are here confronted by an accumulation of living matter. The imperfections of the first apparatus did not allow us to see more than a confused swarming, a sort of throbbing jelly, and excellent observers, such as A.33, then maintained that these terrestrial colonies were composed of animals joined to each other and living a common existence. With our present apparatus it is at once obvious that things are quite otherwise. The individual creatures can be clearly distinguished, and their movements can be followed. The stains observed by A.33 are in point of fact huge nests which can almost be compared to Uranian cities and are known to us as 'manheaps'.

The minute animals inhabiting these towns, Men, are apterous biped mammals, with an indifferent electrical system, and generally provided with an artificial epidermis. It was long believed that they secreted this supplementary skin themselves. But my researches enable me to declare that

this is not so: they are impelled by a powerful instinct to collect certain animal or vegetable fibres and assemble them in such a way as to form a protection against cold.

I use the word 'instinct', and from the outset of this work I must lay stress on a clear indication of my feelings regarding a question which ought never to have been raised and has, especially during recent years, been treated with incredible levity. A curious mode of thought has become habitual amongst our younger naturalists, in attributing to the terrestrial vegetation an intelligence of the same nature as that of the Uranian. Let us leave to others the task of pointing out the distressing nature of such doctrine from the religious point of view. In this book I shall show its absurdity from only the scientific point of view. No doubt the beauty of the spectacle rouses a quite excusable enthusiasm, when one views for the first time under the microscope one of these particles of jelly, and suddenly sees the unfolding of countless lively and interesting scenes—the long streets along which Men pass to and fro, sometimes stopping and apparently exchanging speech, or the small individual nest in which a couple keep watch over a brood of young, or armies on the march, or builders at their work. . . . But for a profitable study of the psychic faculties of these animals it is not enough to profit by the circumstances that chance affords the observer. It is essential to know how to procure the most favourable conditions of observation, and to vary these as much as possible. It is necessary, in a word, to experiment, and thus to build up science on the solid base of fact.

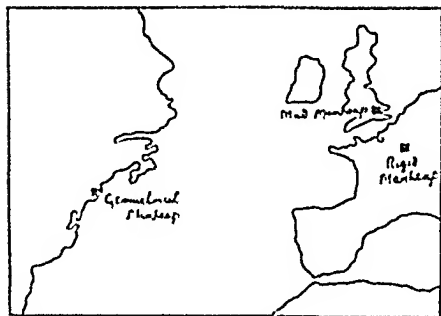
This is what we have sought to do in the course of the long series of experiments reported here. Before embarking on their description I must ask the reader to imagine and to gauge the immense difficulties which such a project was bound to present. Long-distance experiment, no doubt, has

become relatively easy since we had at our disposal the W rays, which enable us to grasp, handle, and even transport bodies through interstellar space. But in dealing with creatures so small and fragile as Men, the W rays are very clumsy and brutal instruments. In our first tests it turned out only too often that we killed the animals we desired to observe. Transmitting appliances of extraordinary sensitiveness were required to enable us to reach exactly the point aimed at, and to treat the sensitive matter with the necessary delicacy. In particular, when first carrying out the transference of Men from one point to another on terrestrial territory, we omitted to take full account of these animals' respiratory difficulties. We made them move too rapidly across a thin layer of air which envelops the Earth, and they died of asphyxiation. We had to construct a real box of rays, inside which the swiftness of transportation produced no effect. Similarly, when we first attempted the bisection and transference of nests, we did not make sufficient allowance for the constructional processes used by the Earth-dwellers. Experience taught us to prop up the nests after their division, by the passage of certain massive currents of rays.

The reader will find here a sketch-map of that portion of the terrestrial surface on which our main experiments were carried out. We would ask them particularly to note the two great manheaps on which we made our first tests, and to which we gave the names, later adopted by the astro-sociologists, of 'Mad Manheap' and 'Rigid Manheap'.

These names we chose on account of the singularly differing plans of these manheaps, one of which at once impresses the observer by its almost geometrical star-patterns of roadways, whilst the other is a complex maze of rather tortuous streets. Between 'Mad Manheap' and 'Rigid Manheap' stretches a gleaming line which is believed to be sea. The greatest manheap on the Earth is 'Geometrical Manheap',

which is even more regular than 'Rigid Manheap', but is far distant from the other two, and separated from them by a wider gleaming surface.



### *First Attempts.*

At what point of the Earth was it best to direct our first efforts? How must we interfere with the lives of these animals in such a way as to obtain instructive reactions from them? I must confess to real emotion when I prepared for the first time to operate on the Earth, armed with an apparatus of adequate range.

I had around me four of my young pupils, who were also deeply moved, and in turn we gazed at the charming miniature landscapes in the ultratelemicroscope. Aiming the apparatus at the 'Mad Manheap', we sought a fairly open locality so as to see the consequences of our action more clearly. Tiny trees gleamed in the spring sunshine, and

multitudes of small motionless insects could be seen forming irregular circles; in the middle of each of these stood an isolated insect. For a moment we speculated on the meaning of this game, but failing to find one, we decided to try an application of the rays. The effect was staggering. A hole was scooped in the ground; some of the insects were buried under the debris; and instantly an astounding activity was loosed. It really looked as if these creatures were intelligently organized. Some went to the rescue of their overwhelmed companions, others went off to get help. We then tried applying the rays on several points of the Earth, but this time we chose uninhabited areas, so as not to endanger our subjects at the very beginning of our researches. We thus learned how to reduce the power of our rays and to operate more skilfully. Being now sure of our means of action, we decided to start the first series of our experiments.

It was my plan to take individuals in a certain manheap, mark them with a touch of a brush, transport them to different points, and then observe whether the transported individual would find his way back to the original manheap. At first, as I have said, we encountered great difficulties, first because the animal died during transference, and then because we had neglected to take into account the artificial epidermis with which these creatures provide themselves. They doff these coverings with the utmost ease, and so once we had set them down again in the midst of a manheap, we lost sight of them. For the subsequent transportations we tried to mark them directly on the body, tearing off the supplementary skin; but in these cases the animal made itself a new skin as soon as it arrived in the manheap.

With a little practice my assistants were at last able to follow one particular animal with the ultratelemicroscope and keep it constantly in sight. They found that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the man returns to his starting-

point. I attempted the transference of two males from the same manheap—the 'Mad Manheap'—with the extremely remote one which we termed the 'Geometrical Manheap'. After ten (terrestrial) days my esteemed pupil E.N. 33, who had followed them night and day with incomparable devotion, showed me them returning to the Rigid Manheap. They had come back, notwithstanding the fact of their unfamiliarity with the places to which I had transported them; they were individuals of stay-at-home habit (we had kept them under long observation), who were obviously seeing for the first time the country where we had deposited them. How did they find the way back? Their transference had been so rapid that observation was out of the question. What was their guide? Certainly not memory, but a special faculty which we must confine ourselves to noting without claiming to explain it, so remote is it from anything in our own psychology.

These transferences raised another problem. Would the returning individual be recognized by the others? Apparently he is. Generally speaking, great excitement is to be seen in the nest when the absent one reappears. The others place their arms round him and sometimes even place their lips on his. In certain cases, however, the feelings manifested appeared to be those of rage or displeasure.

These first experiments showed that some instinct enables Men to recognize their own manheaps. The second problem to which we turned was to find out whether, amongst these creatures, there existed sentiments akin to those of Uranians, and whether, for instance, conjugal or maternal love could exist on the Earth. Such an hypothesis struck me as absurd; it attributed to the Earth-dweller refinements of feeling which the Uranian has attained only through millions of years of civilization. But the duty of the experimental

scientist is to approach his subject with an open mind, and to make all his experiments without any prejudice regarding their outcome.

At night the male Earth-dweller generally rests beside his female. I asked my pupils to bisect some nests in such a way as to separate the male from the female without injuring either, and then to join up one half of Nest A with the half of Nest B, observing whether the little animals took notice of the change. For the experiment to be carried out under normal conditions, it was essential that the selected nests should closely resemble each other; and for this reason I instructed my collaborators to select two nests containing cells of the same size and broods with the same number of young. E.X. 33 showed me, not without pride, two almost identical nests in the 'Mad Manheap' and the 'Rigid Manheap', each of them containing a couple with four little ones. The bisection of the houses, and their transportation, were carried out with admirable skill by E.X. 33, and the results were conclusive. In both cases the couples thus artificially put together by us showed slight surprise at the moment of waking, adequately accounted for by the movement and shock. Then, in both cases, they remained together with no attempt at flight, and in apparently normal attitudes. An almost incredible fact was that, from the very first moment, each of the two females tended the other's brood with no sign of horror or distaste. They were plainly incapable of realizing that they were not dealing with their own offspring.

This experiment was repeated on numerous occasions. In 93 per cent. of cases, the nests and offspring were tended by both couples. The female retains a stubborn sense of her proper functions, without having any idea of the individuals towards which she performs this duty. Whether the children are hers or not, she toils with equal fervour. It might be thought that this confusion is caused by a close resem-

blance between the two nests but at different stages we chose nests of quite different appearances, joining up for instance, the half of a shabby nest with the half of a rich nest of a different species. The results were more or less the same, Man does not distinguish between his own cell and another.

Having thus shown that in the matter of sentiment the Earth-dweller is an animal occupying a very low place in the scale of creation, we sought an appropriate means of gauging his intellectual faculties. The simplest way, it seemed to us, was to isolate a few individuals in a ry-cage and to put at their disposal food which could only be reached by means of more and more complex actions. I took particular pains to choose for this experiment certain Earth-dwellers for whom my colleague A 38 claimed signs of scientific intelligence. In Appendix A will be found the details of this experiment. It showed beyond any possible doubt that the space of time within which Man lives is extremely limited in the past and future, that he immediately forgets, and that he is incapable of imagining the simplest method of self preservation as soon as he is confronted by problems slightly different from those which he has, by heredity, become used to solving.

After a long period of experimenting on individual Earth-dwellings, my pupils and I became familiar enough with the movements of these animals to be able to observe them in their ordinary life without intervention on our part. It is of the utmost interest to follow, as I have done, the history of a manheap through several terrestrial years.

The origin of these human societies is unknown. Why and how did these animals abandon their freedom to become slaves of the manheap? We cannot tell. It may be that in this grouping process they found a support in warfare against other creatures and against natural forces, but it is a



support for which they pay highly. No animal species is so ignorant as this one of leisure and the joy of living. In the great manheaps, and particularly the 'Geometrical Manheap', activity begins at dawn and is prolonged through part of the night. Were this activity necessary, it would be comprehensible; but Man is a creature of such limited nature, so much dominated by his instincts, that he produces hardly anything beyond his requirements. Over and over again have I seen objects accumulating in the reserve stores of a manheap in such numbers that they seemed to be a source of embarrassment; and yet, only a short distance away, another group would continue to manufacture the very same objects.

Little is also known of the division of Mankind into castes. It is established that certain of these animals till the soil and produce nearly all the foodstuffs, whilst others make the supplementary skins or build nests, and others seem to do nothing but move swiftly to and fro over the planet's surface, eating and coupling. Why do the first two classes consent to clothe and feed the third? That remains obscure to me. E.X. 33 has written a notable thesis seeking to prove that this tolerance has a sexual origin. He has shown that at night, when the individuals of the superior caste foregather, the workers collect round the entrances to these festivities in order to see the half-nude females. According to him, the compensation of the sacrificed classes consists of the æsthetic pleasure provided by the spectacle of these easy existences. The theory strikes me as ingenious, but not so firmly based as to convince me of its truth.

For my own part, I would rather seek an explanation in Man's amazing stupidity. It is a supreme folly to be for ever seeking to explain the actions of Men by Uranian reasonings. That is wrong, profoundly wrong. Man is not guided by a free intelligence. Man obeys a fatal and unconscious incitement; he cannot choose what he shall do; he

slides along haphazard, following an irresistible predetermined slope which will bring him to his goal. I amused myself by following the individual existences of certain men in whom the functions of love seemed to be the essentials of their existence. I saw how the conquest of one female to start with brought upon his shoulders all the burdens of nests and young; but not content with that first load, my male would go off in search of a second mate, for whom he set up a new nest. These simultaneous love-affairs led the wretched animal into endless battles of which I was the spectator. It mattered nothing to him; his successive woes seemed to hold no lessons for him, and he went on putting his head into his wretched adventures without seeming to be one whit the wiser after the third than after the first.

One of the strangest proofs of this inability to keep contact with the past and imagine the future, was afforded me by the frightful struggles which I witnessed between individuals of one and the same species. On Uranus it would seem a grotesque idea that one group of Uranians could attack another group, hurling on it projectiles meant to injure it, and trying to asphyxiate it with poisonous gases.

That is what happened on the Earth. Within a few terrestrial years my observation showed me compact masses of men thus confronting each other, now in one corner of that planet, now in another. Sometimes they fought in the open; sometimes they crouched in earthworks and strove to demolish the adjoining earthworks by showering heavy lumps of metal on them. Note that they themselves were at the same time peppered in the same way. It is a hideous and ridiculous sight. The scenes of horror which one witnesses at these times are such that if these creatures had the slightest faculty for remembering, they would avoid their recurrence for at least several generations. But in the course

of even their brief lifetimes, the same men will be seen plunging madly into the same murderous escapades.

Another striking example of this blind subservience of Man to instinct is to be seen in his habit of tirelessly rebuilding manheaps at certain points of the planet where they are fated to destruction. Thus, for instance, I have attentively watched a very populous island where, within eight years, all the nests were destroyed three times by tremors of the outer coating of the Earth. To any sensible observer it is plain that the animals living in these parts ought to migrate. They do nothing of the sort, but pick up once more, with a positively ritual action, the same pieces of wood or iron, and zealously rebuild a manheap which will once more be destroyed in the following year. But, say my critics, however absurd the goal of this activity, it remains true that the activity is regulated, and proves the existence of a directing power, a spirit. Again, a mistaken idea! The swarming of Men disturbed by an earthquake, as I have shown, resembles the movement of gaseous molecules. If the latter be observed individually, they are seen to describe irregular and complicated trajectories, but in combination their great number produces effects of decided simplicity. Similarly, if we demolish a manheap, thousands of insects collide with each other, hamper each other's movements, and show every sign of disorganized excitement; and yet, after a certain time, the manheap is discovered to be built up again.

Such is the strange intellect in which it is now fashionable to see a replica of Uranian reason! But fashion passes, facts remain; and the facts are bringing us back to the good old beliefs regarding the Uranian soul and its privileged destiny. For my own part, I shall be happy if my few experiments, modestly and prudently carried out, have helped towards the downfall of pernicious teachings, and restored these

animals to their proper place in the scale of creatures. Curious and worthy of study they certainly are; but the very naïveté and incoherence of Man's behaviour must force us to bear in mind how great is the gulf fixed by the Creator between bestial instinct and the Uranian soul.

*Death of A.E. 17.*

Happily, A.E. 17 died before he could witness the first interplanetary war, the establishment of relations between Uranus and the Earth, and the ruin of all his work. His great renown endured to his last days. He was a simple, kindly Uranian, who showed vexation only when contradicted. To ourselves it is an interesting fact that the monument erected to his memory on Uranus bears on its plinth a bas-relief designed from a telephotographic picture showing a swarming mass of men and women. Its background is strongly reminiscent of Fifth Avenue.

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PART III  
AMERICA



## ADVICE TO A YOUNG FRENCHMAN LEAVING FOR AMERICA

SINCE you have been making ready for this journey, you have read scores of books about America forget them. The traveller describing a distant country is tempted to exaggerate its strangeness. My own aim is not to please you but to instruct you. Know, then, that the beings with human faces whom you will find on that other shore, after a week on the ocean, are not so different as you imagine from your friends in Europe, or from yourself. They are men like ourselves, who work and suffer eat, drink and make love, read the poets, build temples and destroy them, are born and die. When you have observed for yourself that some of them are as fond of Proust and Valéry as you are, when you have seen the paintings of Degas and Renoir in their homes, and heard Debussy and Dukas and Ravel at their concerts, you will doubtless rather shamefacedly drop that extravagant equipment of a spiritual explorer which I see you wearing. You are leaving for America, not for the moon. Keep your mind clear.

### *Language*

Don't imagine you know American because you speak English. You will find yourself mistaken. The ladies of New York, the professors of Harvard you will understand. But when you come into contact with circles less coloured by European culture you will discover a new language. The existence of racial groupings in America so important that they have preserved over there a national existence, has



enriched the language with Italian, German and Yiddish words; and these have been blended with English rather as Arabic was with Spanish or French in the days of the Moorish invasions. When 'Babbitt' was first published in England, it had to have a vocabulary.

American is a much younger language than English. Its words are born from images, as in primitive tongues. Many are short-lived. When I first went there in 1927 everything that was attractive was 'cute'. In 1931 the word was ludicrous, almost banned. 'Awful' in England, '*formidable*' in France, have gone through the same rise and decline. But in America the cycle is more brief, and the vocabulary of each moment is shorter.

You will be surprised at finding over there that the English 'yes' is often replaced by a sort of double grunting sound, produced without opening the mouth by first expelling a small quantity of air through the nose and then taking a slight breath. Two quite distinct notes are discernible, the second being the higher, which in unison express a kind of approval at once languid, passive and kindly. The women make even more frequent use of these musical and primitive sounds than the men. I have long wondered about their origin. I think it must be sought in the extreme nervous fatigue of human beings after a day of American city life. This double grunt has an advantage over an articulate sound in that it expresses polite indifference with the very minimum of physical effort.

### *Conversation.*

It is a commonplace that conversation does not exist in America. Like all commonplaces this one lacks the finer shades. An after-dinner conversation between professors at Princeton or Yale or Cornell is not unlike a conversation of professors in France or England. I have been at a dinner

—a Round Table dinner—in New York where the political conversation was worthy of Léon Berard. A *tité-à-tité* conversation with an intelligent American woman is one of America's greatest delights. But these joys are few and far between.

And the reason is this: Americans do not allow cooking, 'considered as one of the fine arts,' an important place in life. Luncheon to them is merely alms to the body; they hurriedly sling it fruit or fish, and return to work. A group of writers, in useful reaction, founded in New York a 'Three Hours for Lunch Club', but they are a pleasant exception. Even at dinner general conversation is rare. Each person talks to his neighbour. After dinner the men remain alone, a dreadful custom inherited from England. In New York your host will often suggest taking you on to a theatre, or you will find that he has summoned a pianist, a singer, or a lecturer to the house. The notion of leaving his guests to themselves, and of their finding pleasure in their encounter, amazes and even alarms him. Excessive modesty forbids him to suppose that his friends can possibly be happy just in being under his roof, seeing him and seeing each other. He treats them like children. On Christmas Eve, in some of the most pleasant houses in New York, you will see Christmas trees for grown-ups. What's more, after a dinner-party of remarkable men, with whom really you would like to get into conversation, you will find a conjurer arriving and doing his best to amuse the old gentlemen. You will then understand that the absence of conversation in America comes, not from a void of ideas or wit or information, but from an incurable shyness and prodigious self-distrust. In no country will you find such powerlessness in self-expression. It is your part to overcome these resistances and give these 'repressed' people the chance of repose and trust.

Drink will help you. In France, I know, you drink little. In America you will have some difficulty in keeping sober. Nearly everywhere you will be offered cocktails, and it will not be easy for you to decline them. In American eyes, Prohibition has set a higher value than ever before on the offer of a drink. The man who pours it out for you is sacrificing a definite part of a supply, a limited wealth. It will hurt him if you seem to undervalue his sacrifice. You have heard a lot about dangerous drinks, and poisonous blends of wine; if you hold back, you will seem to be lacking in trust or in courage. Reflect, to console yourself, that in 'dry' homes, the cocktail's place may be taken by a glass of tomato juice.

of the mind You will find in that country a literature and an architecture Painting? We must wait what I have seen is too much inspired by the modernity of Europe to be truly original But their books are among the best of our day

What intellectual life may be in Pittsburgh or Detroit I do not know, but I think you will find New York one of the most mentally stimulating cities of the world New York is the clearing house for the ideas of the universe All the important books of all languages are translated there A public is found there for Virginia Woolf and André Gide and Thomas Mann To-day the most widely read book in America is by a Swede, to-morrow it will be a Frenchman's, next day a Russian's Read their young reviews the *Symposium*, the *Hound and Horn*, the *New Republic* You will be astonished at the extent of their information and the quality of their judgment

Of course this universal curiosity is not without its dangers Mental life suffers in the United States from evils which belong to our epoch but have there assumed a virulent form The most serious is the rapid wearing out of ideas It has been said that the whole American people take up a scientific idea just as they take up a fashion in shoes That is true Freud Behaviourism the Humanism of Irving Babbitt, the relativity of Einstein have successively in elementary form, penetrated the middle classes much more thoroughly than in Europe But the American tires of systems as quickly as he becomes infatuated with them His intellectual fashions are very fleeting Because the most brilliant minds of Europe go over there to display their range of paradoxes the blasé American brain craves for spiritual nourishment of a highly flavoured kind The critical spirit is lacking not amongst the few, but in the masses But the masses in Europe, you will say, have little enough of that

Perhaps: but in France they have towards ideas a certain common sense, a traditional mistrust, and in England a splendid indifference and deep contempt, which act as a fly-wheel and prevent the motors of the mind from jamming. In the United States freshness of mind is greater and curiosity more naïve. That is agreeable, but it entails formidable errors.

So, if you wish to produce a rapid effect upon the crowds in this country, you can. Be brilliant, be cynical. Burn the idols of other men, and idolize what they have burned. Criticize America ferociously. There will be violent reactions; they will help your ephemeral fame. The newspapers will quote your words. You will be famous, and three months later, forgotten. But if you wish, as I hope you do, to bring to these strangers the best of yourself, act in just the contrary way. Be simple; do not force your thought; seek to find precise and subtle shades, as if you were addressing the most cultivated and exacting of your own compatriots. You won't make much of a stir. The reporters will be disappointed at not finding a good headline in what you have said, and will report you in three lines, or not at all. But gradually you will see the sensitive, modest, balanced minds drawing nearer to you. There are many such in the United States. They will fasten on to your person. Not that you are a man of genius, but you can give them something which they lack and which you owe to France—a liking for order in ideas, the art of constructing, a long and inventive tradition in analysis of the feelings. And they, for their part, can bring you freshness of mind and a direct manner of setting moral or metaphysical problems, as if they were completely new. You will teach them maturity. They will reveal youthfulness to you. Is it not from such exchanges that the friendships of peoples and men are formed?

*Food.*

You have been told that the American does not know how to eat? All general statements are misleading. The American cuisine is monotonous (you'll eat chicken every night and ice-cream twice a day), but when that cuisine is simple it is good. Why should one complain in a land where fruits are plentiful and fresh, where the breakfast grape-fruits match the midday persimmons, where botanists, by scientific grafting, have produced a super-fruit in the melon they have named the 'Honeydew'? In New England remember the 'sea food'; Boston has its fish like Marseilles. In roadside hostelryes ask for roast chicken and Lima beans. Beware of salads. American salads are culinary heresies: you will find in them slices of fresh fruit sinfully soaked in oil, scattered pieces of cheese and cabbage, lettuce hearts so dense that your knife cannot deal with them. The bread, often home-made, is varied in shape and flavour. You may regret the French loaf, so nicely salted, but you will like those dinner-rolls with their sprinkling of hard, scented poppy-seeds. Finally, don't be surprised at finding so many dishes decked out with queer, superfluous adornments. This youthful race has more taste for finery than for the pleasures of the palate.

*Dress.*

Wear what you would wear in Paris. Dark, sober clothes in town; tweeds, plus-fours and stockings in the country. In the daytime all the men have taken on that appearance of the well-paid workman which the soft collar gives to a millionaire. The American wage-earner wears a soft cap, sometimes a 'derby'. He keeps them on his head at work and pulls an overall over his suit. To our European eyes this gives him the appearance of an amateur who has happened to stop accidentally at this job or underneath that car.

But, you ask me, don't all Americans wear the same clothes and the same hat at the same moment? So I have read. Perhaps it was true once. I have never noticed it myself. I have seen 'derbies', I have seen cloth caps, and I have seen young men hatless. At Princeton I have heard tell of days when to wear an open shirt-collar *à la* Shelley or Byron was a sign of rebellion to be punished by social ostracism. But these things happened three or four years ago, that is to say, in a distant past. In 1930 a student was free to dress as he chose. There were fashions, of course—a certain beige cashmere pullover, a style in grey flannel trousers—but as fashions they were no stricter than those of Oxford or Cambridge. Only the first year undergraduate was bound to observe a decent modesty: a black cap was obligatory for him, and coloured neckties forbidden. But after a victory of their team over Yale these young men rebelled, and appeared one morning decked in flaming neckties. The elders capitulated.

### *Social Usage.*

Because the United States is a democratic country, you imagine a life free of constraints. That is because you have never studied the morality of primitive peoples. The younger a human group, the more rigid its formalism, because the men therein can be tamed and bent to social life only by strict rules. It is in the oldest aristocracies that the most lax manners and the most free-and-easy grace are to be sought. The pioneer in solitude becomes brutalized. When he starts to live a social life a code and manners have to be imposed upon him. The ceremoniousness of Louis XIV was contrived for the rough nobility of the Fronde. The formality of pioneers is surprising. If you live, as I have done, in an American university town, you will find scores of visiting-cards on your table the day after your arrival.

The whole Faculty calls. Even those who find you at home leave a card when they go, and you in your turn, if you have the strength, must return these scores of calls. A telephone invitation is rare, and is held to be contrary to proper usage. If it has been forced by circumstances it is followed by a letter of apology. The smallest events are made the excuse for letters of sympathy or good wishes. An American friend will write and tell you that it was a pleasant dinner the evening before and that he will always remember it. On every occasion gifts are exchanged, small and valueless, but forging links of friendly feeling. When you are tired or overworked you will think these attentions a nuisance. But look closer, and you will see how much they help to build up life in this young society.

Beware of supposing that America, as a country without an hereditary nobility, is a country without hierarchies. I know few nations where the etiquette of scorn has so many forms. The Anglo-Saxons look down on the other races, and they look down on each other. The Southerner looks down on the Northerner, the Easterner looks down on the man from the Middle West. The Americans with two centuries behind them despise those with one, and they despise those with half-a-century, and these refuse to look at newcomers. In the old families, where a son bears his father's name (there is always a Cornelius Vanderbilt or a Percy Pyne, just as there is always a Corisande amongst the Gramonts and a François amongst the La Rochefoucaulds), the name is followed by a numeral. One day they will be talking of John Jacob Astor XVII, as they say Prince Henry XXII of Reuss. In Hollywood the old families are those of the silent film days—such as Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. They have their English butlers, lace-covered tables, a conservative cuisine, old wines. Charlie Chaplin is the Swann of this old-fashioned society, where people talk



in low mournful tones of the good old days when screens were dumb.

American snobbery fastens on to signs of nobility of the most curious kind; they would have delighted Marcel Proust. It is a social asset to have your telephone number as low as possible. A new-made millionaire will be ready to pay a large sum to the official who allots automobile number-plates in order to secure a figure in the first hundred, when one falls vacant by the extinction of some great name. A box at the Metropolitan Opera House has its own history, like a fauteuil of the French Academy; the names of the successive holders are printed on the programmes. On the occasion of charity performances, when all the boxes are for sale, a *nouveau riche* will find it supremely flattering to his pride to occupy the Astor Box or the Cutting Box.

If you care for happiness, steer clear of professional hostesses; they will devour your time and your strength. Choose a small number of friends. There are certain simple and delightful houses in New York; shun the others. It is different, of course, if for some particular purpose you want to conquer the town. Be more snobbish than the snobs. Your standoffishness will astound them; your silence will perturb them; your capriciousness will hold them spell-bound. These people suffer from too rigid a framework in life; shatter the frameworks.

### *The Sentimental Life.*

You may arrive convinced by the tales of your fellow-passengers that there is great moral freedom in America. Be cautious. This is the country where women are most closely protected. Adultery is rare; multiple divorce takes its place. The young girls, beautiful and often intelligent, are determined on marriage. What they call their 'technique' is an art of love very different from Ovid's. It is

true that your status as a foreigner will afford you some security, for the European is desirable as a lover or a friend, but not as a husband. He could not be, like the American, at once generous and free from jealousy. The marriage of a Frenchman and an American woman is one of two spoilt children—an unstable compound. Minds work more simply here. Passion does not play so large a part. You will be surprised how easily a young man, arriving with a girl who seems to you to be 'his', puts up with the sight of her giving her attention to another man. Men do not cling as we do to what runs away from them: withdrawal is better than suffering—'How can you depict men in your novels as being so much taken up with women?' they asked me. 'Have your heroes nothing to do'—Ingenuous, but sincere. Yet if you do touch the heart of one of these splendid creatures, her attachment to you will be all the greater because this perturbed kind of European love will be new to her. The American woman finds slaves; she looks for a master. If you are free, play that hand. It is a fine stake.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### ENVOI.

I should like to tell you more about young men and sports and colleges and girls—they are all a paradise; and about political parties—which are all a hell. But you are going, and I can say only a word. You are going into a land of shyness: don't mislay your sympathy. You are entering the land of kindness: don't forget your warm-heartedness. You are going to the land of youth: don't forget your enthusiasm. A people is a mirror in which every traveller views his own image. In America as everywhere, remember, you will find only what you bring. Fashion within yourself an America of which you will be worthy: that is the only America you will discover.

## AMERICA THE UNEXPECTED

I HAVE an aged friend somewhere in Europe who professes violent and very definite ideas regarding the United States. As a matter of fact, they are the more definite because my friend has never crossed the Atlantic. For this very reason no hateful confusion of actual facts has ever troubled the wondrous simplicity of his judgments, and he can wholeheartedly and impenitently call down maledictions on a country which he has never seen and where he knows nobody.

Some time ago I had to confess to him that the University of Princeton had offered me the tenure for a few months of a chair of French literature, and that I was thinking of accepting it. He flung up his hands.

'My poor young friend!' he exclaimed. 'Don't do that! You'll never come back alive. You don't know what America is like. It is a country where there is such commotion that you will never have a moment to yourself, where the din is so continuous that you will get neither rest nor sleep, where men die at forty from excessive work and the women leave their homes first thing in the morning to join in the universal hubbub. Mind and intelligence have no value over there. Freedom of thought is non-existent. Human beings have no souls. The only talk you will hear is about money. From childhood you have known the graciousness of a spiritual civilization; there you will find a civilization of bathrooms and central heating and frigidaire. . . . My dear friend, have you read about the Chicago stockyards? Monstrous, I assure you! Apocalyptic! And those stories in

every newspaper about gangs of thugs murdering in broad daylight, and the police hand-in-glove with them. . . ? Really, I am alarmed for your safety. You have a wife and family. . . . Give up this idea, I beg you.'

Next day I sailed.

I have now lived for four months in Princeton, New Jersey, and this is the letter I have been writing to my aged friend:

I hardly dare to describe to you the America I have been discovering. You will not believe me; yet what I am going to tell you is simply the exact description of what I have seen. Picture it to yourself: I am living in a pretty provincial town, in a small wooden house surrounded by trees and covered with ivy, the garden of which is separated from the neighbouring gardens only by well-trimmed hedges. Friendly little grey squirrels are playing under my windows. In the street I see a few motor-cars passing, far fewer than in a street in Tours or Avranches, and every hour or two someone strolls past, usually one of my neighbours, a professor like myself. At night the silence is so profound that I sometimes feel restless, and if I wake up suddenly I listen for the distant noise of the Paris tramways.

If I go out I find in one direction a lake, bordered with maples and willows, in the other the town, which consists of the University buildings, small houses like my own, and one shopping street, Nassau Street. There, in the mornings, you can see the professors' wives doing their shopping, as used to happen in the provincial towns of France in times gone by. I believe you would find quite a true picture of the life in that main street by reading certain novels of Balzac, which are set in Touraine or Poitou about 1835.

So much for the hubbub and excitement. As for the social and intellectual life, it cuts me to the quick to tell you, my dear —, that the picture I contemplate every day is likewise totally different from the one you sketched for me. I talk a great deal with my pupils, with my colleagues, with their wives. Shall I dare to admit that they *have* minds, and some of them very sensitive ones. . . ? And what sort of conversations do we have? Well, it is very odd, but really they are remarkably like those I might have in Paris with intelligent friends. The talk is about the same things and the same books. Marcel Proust, Balzac, Flaubert, Sinclair Lewis and André Siegfried play a great part in our intercourse. The European situation is discussed, sometimes ignorantly, often sympathetically; we even discuss America, with as much freedom as you do yourself.

Not a spiritual civilization, you assured me, but one of baths and frigidares. . . . I'm sorry, my dear —, but you have a poor hand, and these cards are almost comical. For if I have one grievance against this house, where I have been so happy, it would be its lack of comfort. My American central heating is an aged hot-air apparatus, of a type that no longer exists anywhere in Europe and seems to be blessed with a queer perversity of spirit, for it provides an intolerable warmth on the blazing days when this country's autumn seems like spring, but enters into competition with the frigidaire when the outside temperature drops.

As for my bathroom, it is quite nice to look at, but it is quite chimerical to look for hot water in it, although this circumstance has enabled me to resume a habit of my younger days, taking a cold shower instead of a warm bath. I must apologize for contradicting you on every point, but after all, I can only give you the fruits of my

personal experience, can't it? In another house, somewhere else, everything might possibly have been different, but here I have found comforts of the mind rather than of the body.

Finally, you threatened me with terrifying brigands, organized gangs, a life unpoliced and unsafe. But just fancy, my house is not so much as surrounded by a wall, its windows are covered with blinds which a burglar could flick aside with his finger, and when I have to leave it for a few days I don't lock the door, so that the postman can leave my letters and parcels in the entrance hall. Like you, I read in the newspapers of tragic happenings, but we must avoid taking drama as the rule and tragedy as an average representation of life. I assure you that America is not entirely enrolled amongst the gangsters and that few men spend their leisure hours in the Chicago stock-yards.

Of course you will tell me that the contrary is true also, and that Princeton is not America. I agree. If I had to paint Pittsburgh or Chicago the picture would be very different. Morand's picture of New York is brilliant and perfectly accurate. But the truth, you will agree, is that the real world is not made up of these crude and simple opposites as our passions would so often like. When Burke was addressing the English in 1793 about France, he said 'I do not know of a method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people.' When that people is youthful, alive, and only asking to understand us better, does it not seem more humane, and more wise, to seek to understand it rather than condemn it?

## AMERICAN STUDENTS AND FRENCH NOVELS

I SHOULD like to give an authentic picture of the conversations which a French professor can have with some American pupils. These conversations are frequent, even obligatory, at Princeton. The Professor, of course, gives a course of lectures, during which the pupils take notes, but in the intervals of these the pupils come to his house in groups of six or seven, for more intimate talks. Here the aim is not so much an extension of the lectures as to make the young men talk themselves, to assure oneself that they have read the books of the syllabus, and to accustom them to the expression of their own ideas.

Imagine, then, a glorious autumn day (outside, the maples and sycamores offer a marvellous gamut of red, brick, copper and saffron), and imagine the novice professor awaiting his first tutorial in the tiny drawing-room of his small wooden house. He is not free from anxiety. Will they talk? Will they know French well enough to follow the conversation and take part in it? He has asked them to read the 'Princesse de Clèves': will they appreciate these chivalrous lovers, so jealous of their honour, so sensitive to the fine shades of sentiment? He re-reads the opening pages of the novel. . . . The bell rings.

They have arrived in a body, hatless (only first-year men wear a black cap); they look like a pack of young dogs, vigorous and cheerful, enlivened by this sunshine. They give me their names, which I try my best to remember. There is Plug, a boy from the Middle West, with a formidable American accent; Alexander, lively, charming, rebellious, reminds

me of a thoroughbred always pulling on the reins; McCarter, a New Yorker in a black pullover; Meyrovitz has the head of an intellectual, very delicate; Robinson is English; the blond, very frail Arlington, marvellously tailored in light flannel, has lived for a long time in Paris.

I can see at once that I shall have no difficulty in starting conversation; friendly and respectful, they are quite at their ease.

'I should like you to talk first,' I said. 'Mr. McCarter, how did you like the "Princesse de Clèves"?'

'So-so,' he replied. . . . 'I found it well written, but the characters are childish. . . . To begin with, people don't die of love. . . .'

'Are you sure of that?'

'I've never known a case, sir. Nor heard of one . . . I may be wrong, but life seems to me so much simpler than these people want to make it.'

'Sure,' says Plug. 'They were a queer lot, these people long ago; they worked up tragedy everywhere. . . . This morning we were reading "Phèdre" with M. Coindreau, and I said to him: "But why does Phèdre make such a bother? I have a friend in Chicago myself who fell in love with his stepmother. He told his father, and his father asked her if *she* loved my friend. And she said she did. So his dad got a divorce and my friend married his stepmother. . . . Now don't you think that's a better way? If Phèdre was a reasonable woman she would not go on moaning about being 'seated in the gloom of the forests', but she'd have a serious talk with Theseus and marry Hippolytus. Don't you think so, sir?'

'But you forget that Racine knew nothing about divorce, and that possibly Theseus loved Hippolytus. . . . No, I don't agree with you, Mr. Plug. For my own part I find that life is very difficult and that the conflicts of passion are sometimes irremediable.'



'Exactly, sir,' says Alexander fiercely. 'What surprises me in the "*Princesse de Clèves*" is the ease with which all these men who say they love Mme de Clèves yield their ground to M. de Nemours. . . . Why? Real men wouldn't do that.'

I explain something about the chivalrous ideal.

'What you call the chivalrous man,' says Robinson, 'is really the gentleman. . . . M. de Clèves behaves like a gentleman.'

'Possibly,' says the charming Alexander, 'but all the same, if he had felt a real passion, he would have done something; he'd have taken his wife somewhere far away, or killed Nemours . . . And Mme de Clèves isn't really a passionate woman either. She is always talking about "safeguarding her glory". She is like the American women of the eighteen-sixties, always concerned first and foremost with safeguarding their "respectability". It's prudent, but not very estimable.'

'Is it really true, sir,' says Plug, 'that these people in the seventeenth century lived like that, and spent their time telling love-stories? Hadn't they anything to do?'

'Yes, as a matter of fact they had very little to do. You must bear in mind that the seventeenth century was a time when the French nobility, hitherto warlike and powerful, was moulded to the form of court life by a royal power stronger than itself. These great characters were thus thrust into retirement and needed some way of filling up their leisure. They simply had to be tamed. Whence the *Précieuses*, the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*, and later those dissections of sentiment which astonish you. You Americans will soon be coming to the same thing, when your own Louis XIV (who is called Over-production) forces idleness on you against your own will.'

They laugh. The talk continues with great animation,

and shows me that all of them, except Alexander, who is a romantic, and Meyrovitz, a Spinozist, are hostile to love viewed as a passion. For next time, I give them 'Candide' to read. I think they will enjoy it.

'Sir,' Arlington asks me as he goes out, 'wasn't the "Princesse de Clèves" the inspiration for Radiguet's "Bal du Comte d'Orgel"?'

'Yes. Have you read it?'

'Of course,' he said. 'Radiguet was a friend of Cocteau, and I read everything Cocteau writes.'

### *Second Week*

'Well,' I said, 'his "Candide" been a success?'

'A great success,' says Alexander, lighting a cigarette. 'It's very amusing, but Candide is really too stupid. He never learns a thing from all his calamities.'

'What? You've not forgotten the end, have you?'

'Yes, at the end he realizes that he must cultivate his garden, but he realizes it too late.'

'What exactly does that mean, sir? "*Il faut cultiver notre jardin*"?' asks Robinson.

'What do you think?'

'It's quite simple,' says Alexander. 'It means "Let's concern ourselves as little as possible with men, who are wicked, or with greatness, which is dangerous, and let us live quietly and go on working"—like Voltaire himself at Ferney.'

'Yes,' says Robinson the Englishman, 'but it can also mean "Let us cultivate our inward garden, our spirit".'

'And it can have an even wider meaning,' says Meyrovitz. 'Let us cultivate this planet which is our garden, let us advance the humane sciences and not bother about the universe, which is an absurdity.'

'Good,' I said. 'Let's take the first meaning. Do you think

that it would be a wise philosophy of life to concern yourself no further with other men, to extirpate all your ambition, and to shut yourself up in your secret garden?’

‘An old man’s wisdom, perhaps,’ says Alexander scornfully. ‘But if I were Candide, I should get bored in my garden and go back to see the world again, with its earthquakes and commercial crises and inquisitors, and—and its excitement!’

‘Then do you think, like Martin, that man is doomed to pass from the spasms of anxiety to the lethargy of boredom?’

‘I do, sir. . . . I prefer anxiety. . . .’

‘For my own part,’ says McCarter, ‘I like Martin. He is very intelligent. He says you should work, without too much reasoning. That’s the truth.’

‘Not at all!’ says Robinson. ‘I believe that you have to think in order to cultivate your garden properly. You must have a certain idea of the world and cultivate it in the light of its harmony with a whole. . . . A garden cut off from the rest of the world does not exist.’

‘I agree,’ I said. ‘Martin and Pangloss are both wrong. . . . This world is neither the best nor the worst of all possible worlds; it is the only one, and we have to study it as best we can, in order to lessen by a little the miseries of the human societies that dwell in it.’

‘But, sir,’ asks Alexander, ‘do you believe that they *can* be made less miserable? Is the world any better now than in Voltaire’s day?’

‘I ask you the same question. . . .’

‘No, I don’t think it is,’ he answers. ‘There is less visible cruelty, but more hidden cruelty. The last war was more hideous than that of the Bulgars and the Abares in “Candide”. . . . The electric chair is more horrible than the guillotine. . . . Our police are extremely barbarous.’

'And what of our material advances—motor-cars, telephones, medicine? Don't they strike you as immense since Voltaire's time?'

I am curious to know the reaction of my young Americans to this subject. To my great surprise the whole class, except McCarter, sides against these comforts

'Cars and telephones don't add anything to happiness,' they declare.

'What!' says McCarter. 'In Voltaire's time you had to climb the stairs on foot. now we have elevators. Man is a lazy animal, and therefore elevators add to his happiness.'

'When there were no elevators,' says Alexander, 'there were hardly any stores.'

'Anyhow, sir,' breaks in the nasal voice of Plug, who has so far been listening in silence, 'if Candide had kept a single one of his Eldorado sheep, which were laden with gold and precious stones, he'd have dodged all his troubles.'

### *Third Week*

Reading the 'Chartreuse de Parme'. This time they arrive in high dudgeon

'Oh! It is far too long!' says McCarter.

'And too boring,' says Plug

'Boring! The "Chartreuse"! You surprise me, really! I always find it the least boring book in the world.'

'Don't exaggerate,' says Meyrovitz to his friends. 'I certainly was interested in the main story—Clélia, the Duchesse. But as for the rest . . . the comedian, the stories of the archbishop and Rossi—I agree, it's far too long.'

'Besides,' says Plug, 'he's anti-American, this Stendhal. There is a vicious attack on the "King Dollar" . . . Was it fashionable, even in 1839, to speak ill of America?'

'He speaks far more ill of France,' says Meyrovitz. 'Italy seems to be his only object of admiration.'

'How does Fabrice love Clélia?' asks Alexander. 'He barely seems to know her.'

'Exactly,' I say. 'It is one of Stendhal's favourite theories that love increases in the course of absence, through the process which he calls "crystallization". . . .' And I explain the story of the bough of Salzburg, which is merely a dead twig if it be not covered with the glittering crystals of the salt. Thus the charm of a woman we love is made up far more from the qualities which our love lends her, than from her actual brilliance. They like that theory.

'It isn't new,' says Arlington. 'Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder.'

'It is always new,' I remark. 'You will find it again in Proust under the name of subjectivity of the sentiments.'

'But I don't understand, sir,' says Alexander. 'In your lecture this morning you showed us Stendhal as a man of high passions, especially where love was concerned. How can he regard love as a crystallization, that is to say a subjective sentiment, and at the same time be so exalted himself by what is mere illusion?'

'I see no difficulty,' says Meyrovitz. 'Man can produce his own double. When I go to the theatre I know quite well that the play I am seeing is a mere illusion, that the hero is not a king, that the victim does not die. That doesn't prevent me, after five minutes, from forgetting that I know these things. I am moved, I weep, I laugh. So in love, why shouldn't one believe in the drama?'

'It isn't at all the same thing,' answers Alexander. 'In the theatre we accept the play as a play. When we love a girl we want her to be really worthy of being loved.'

'Of course!' cries the indignant Plug. 'And she is. . . . Not always, but very often. . . . It isn't we who give women their qualities. "Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder," I dare say; but sometimes the beauty is likewise in

the face of the girl you are looking at. . . . There are some girls, you know, who have real beauty.'

'Possibly,' says Arlington, rather loftily 'But they're never the ones you love.'

'Do you know, sir,' says Meyrovitz, 'that there is a story very like that of Fabrice, refusing to leave his prison because he may possibly catch a glimpse of his love there? It is in Chaucer, a tale of two brothers shut up in the same prison and both in love with the gaoler's daughter. One gains his liberty, the other remains, and the one who is pardoned can never find consolation.'

'Quite true, I remember,' says Alexander. 'It's a fine story—I'm very fond of it.'

'So you see that you are more Stendhalian than you imagine!' I remark.

#### *Fourth Week*

They arrive much excited by a riot which troubled the campus last night. Coming out from a meeting the young men tore down a statue from its plinth, a figure representing the Christian Student, and bore it off, notwithstanding the Dean, to Nassau Street, where it blocked the traffic for several hours.

'What a crazy notion!' I told them. 'Are you ten-year-olds? What harm has this wretched statue done you? Can't you recognize that your Dean is a delightful and cultured man whose word should be respected?'

'The Dean's all right,' says Alexander. 'We didn't want to annoy him. . . . But believe me, it isn't so absurd as it looks, all this. . . . You must realize that this statue is the symbol of everything we hate. It represents the "Good Young Man", with a Bible under one arm and a football under the other. . . . It was presented to the University to honour the type of pious and respectable athlete which our

generation holds in horror. . . . It is a state of mind we're attacking, not a statue.'

'Every year,' says the nasal Plug, 'every year the Christian Student gets a lesson. . . . Last year the boys gilded him.'

'And they ran a lipstick over the lips of the Medici Venus,' adds Meyrovitz.

'Was that symbolic too? But we're a long way from our subject. . . . I should like you to tell me about "Eugénie Grandet".'

'I've noticed,' says Plug, 'that you're very keen on our sticking to the subject in conversation. Is that a French peculiarity?'

'It may be. A taste for unity. Well then . . . who wants to talk about "Eugénie Grandet"?'

After a moment more of stories pell-mell they settle down to pay homage to Balzac.

'It's far better than the "Chartreuse de Parme",' they say.

They like the description of Saumur. Two or three have read other Balzac novels and like them. That active pessimism, that scorn of humanity, that zest for life, the blend seems to be made for them. (For American optimism has greatly altered amongst the present generation; they desire to be thought cynics.) Nevertheless, they proffer a few objections.

'Eugénie is rather a fool,' says Alexander. . . . (It was he who said likewise of Candide.) 'All she had to do was to join Charles Grandet in the Indies.'

'No,' says Plug, 'she couldn't have done that. It must have been very difficult to get out there in those days; there was no regular service. But what I should have liked is a stronger ending. Why does Balzac marry Eugénie off? That's very flat. She ought to remain an old maid, gradually becoming as miserly as her father, and the book should end

with a scene of her refusing two lumps of sugar to old Nanon.'

'That would not be at all bad, Mr. Plug. Not that Balzac did not observe that side of the subject. Do you remember? There is a scene where Eugénie answers: "We shall see," exactly in the father's tone of voice. . . . But perhaps he has shown himself a greater artist than yourself just by not abusing that possibility. Your end is very good—it is a little too good . . . too much of the "novel standing like a pyramid" as Flaubert said. You must beware of strength when it is obtained by artificial means.'

'Exactly!' says Arlington, 'my complaint is that Balzac doesn't beware enough. . . . What annoys me when I read him is that his characters lack the fine shades. Grandet is a miser and nothing else. A human being, after all, is more complex.'

'Do you think so? There are some passions which have gradations, and others, on the contrary, which take hold of a man utterly. Avarice is one, fleshly indulgence another . . . Baron Hulot in "Cousine Bette" is a very true character.'

'Tell us, sir,' says Plug, 'why the brother's creditors are filled with admiration when Grandet pays them the interest on the debt? Wasn't that quite a matter of course?'

Whereupon they engage in a lively argument on business morality. The better I know them, the more I am struck by this habit of always fastening on to questions of practical morality. Pure æsthetics are a matter of indifference to them. They are interested for a time in studying whether a novel is well or badly constructed, but never deeply interested. How should one act?—that is the real problem for them.

After the tutorial McCarter asks me if he can wait for a moment.

'Why, certainly.'

And when the others had gone, he asked me abruptly:



'I should like to ask you something, sir. . . . Is incest very common in France?'

'Incest?' I repeat in astonishment. 'No, not at all. . . . At any rate, not more than elsewhere. But why?'

'Why, because all the plays and novels we read are full of incest. "*Phèdre*" is a story of incest; and "*René*", which I'm reading with the Dean—incest. . . . Your "*Chartreuse de Parme*" is an aunt in love with her nephew. And then, yesterday again, "*Eugénie Grandet*". . . .'

'"*Eugénie Grandet*"?' I exclaim in surprise. 'But that is not a story of incest, is it?'

'Oh, yes, it is. . . . It is a cousin in love with her cousin. That makes me just as wild. The other day we had a friend staying at home with us for the week-end who is engaged to his cousin. My sister and I felt quite ill to see him kissing the girl. . . .'

'That is strange,' I said. 'It's a feeling I don't know at all.'

'And then another thing, sir: how emotional all these novels are. . . . I mean, how lacking in calm and indifference all these characters are, Stendhal's as much as Balzac's! How seriously they take their passions!'

'But don't you yourselves have passions that you take seriously?'

'Far less so, sir. Over here you'll see a boy who seems to be in love with a girl. He will see one of his friends take possession of her. But he won't show any displeasure, and perhaps afterwards he will marry the girl just the same. . . . I've often seen that. I don't say it is better.'

I question him about his family and upbringing.

'My father was very strict,' he says. 'I never went out at night until I was sixteen. I have great admiration for my father's and mother's way of life. They were terribly old-fashioned; they loved each other. But certainly they were happy, and they made me happy.'

'Then do you think that it would be better for American youth to turn back to these sterner morals?'

'I don't think they ought to turn back to the old-style hypocrisy. . . . What we need would be to have freedom but to refrain from using it, through reason . . . Now, I myself don't care for your nineteenth century, but I do admire the French seventeenth century. The characters in Molière are human beings that I can feel close beside me. . . . They're sad, they're comic, they're reasonable—like the people I see around me. La Rochefoucauld too, that's a man I can understand—or Saint-Simon. The Romantics bore me. Henriette in "Les Femmes Savantes" would be just the sort of woman I should marry. But not Clélia, nor Eugénie.'

He stayed quite a long time. I liked his lively seriousness.

### *Fifth Week*

I gave them a choice between 'Madame Bovary' and 'L'Education Sentimentale', and I noticed that they were alarmed at the length of both books. Pardonable alarm. they have only a week, and to read a novel of five hundred pages in a foreign language, and with other lectures to attend, is heavy work.

The leaves have fallen in the avenue now, and the winter constellations are rising in the clear sky.

'You must be cold. Sit down in front of the fire.'

Several of them squat down in front of the fireplace and light cigarettes.

'Well, then, "L'Education Sentimentale"?'

They exchange glances and laugh.

'Terrible!' says Plug, with comical conviction in his huge voice.

'Terrible? In what sense?'

'Terrible. . . . Terribly long! Terribly boring!'

'But Flaubert meant it to be boring. . . . Do you remember the passage of Proust I was reading to you this morning, about that everlasting imperfect tense of Flaubert's which gives his sentences the monotony of a great river?'

'Well, all I can say,' answers Plug, 'is that if the man wanted to write a boring novel, he sure did so.'

Alexander protests:

'Well, I read "*Madame Bovary*". . . . It's wonderful, but disheartening. . . . Charles Bovary is too much of a fool; Emma is too stupid in her choice of lovers. . . . Everything becomes petty, shabby, horrible. . . . Life isn't so wretched as all that. . . . Whenever I got through thirty pages I had to stop to look at the sun, or get a breath of air, or a game of tennis. . . . Then I could come back to the sorrowful M. Flaubert with a store of contentment.'

I try to expound Flaubert's doctrine: that romanticism is something unavoidable, but always fails because it seeks the unattainable; that every destiny fails because external forces are hostile to the dream (I read them several passages to show how Frédéric Moreau is perpetually escaping instead of living); whence, a scorn for worldly temptations and an escape into art. Man cannot imagine the things he actually has. ' "You depict wine, love and fame, on one condition, my friend—that you are neither drunkard, lover nor soldier." '

'Well, sir,' says Plug, 'I'd far rather be a drunkard or a lover or a soldier, and not depict anything at all!'

'Yes, Mr. Plug. But that just shows us that you are cut out for a man of action, not for an artist.'

'Yes, but why talk of Flaubert's "admirable" life? If he made a religion of his art, isn't that simply because he was incapable of becoming a drunkard or a lover or a soldier?'

'Partly for that reason. We always lend some support of reason to our most unavoidable actions. . . .'

'It all cuts both ways,' says Meyrovitz. 'You could also maintain that he could not become a soldier *because* he was an artist.'

'No,' says Plug. 'It is the men who are impotent in action who take refuge in art. . . . You never find the man incapable of art taking refuge in action . . . A bad writer never becomes a great politician.'

'How do I know?' I answer. 'In any case, we know of writers who have passed their great creative period and then turn to a life of action. We have our Lamartine, and the English have their Byron.'

'What I don't see,' says Meyrovitz, 'is why art is exempt from Flaubert's nihilism. If everything is illusory, a description of life is also an illusion.'

'No, Mr. Meyrovitz, that is precisely what I shall try to show you in connection with Proust and what he called 'Time Recovered'. The special property of a work of art is that it catches a dream and gives stability of outline to an ever-shifting world . . . Only, in my opinion, there is another method of escaping the dream, and that is, action. Where Flaubert's characters go wrong is in dreaming their loves and their labours. That is why they are unhappy. If Bouvard and Pécuchet had done more farming and read fewer books about agriculture, they would have gathered their crops of vegetables, and they would have found a kind of happiness in that.'

'Yes,' says Alexander, 'if Frédéric were Mme Arnoux's lover instead of imagining her clad as an odalisque before the pictures in the Louvre, he would be less boring, and less melancholy. . . . Dreaming about playing tennis is no good, so is reading books about tennis, but playing tennis is great fun.'

'"The soul's joy lies in doing," said Shelley,' I remind him

'Do you remember what I said the other day?' asks McCarter. 'I can see now why I prefer the people of the seventeenth century to those of the nineteenth. They did less dreaming and they took more action. . . .'

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So the winter passed . . . Zola—Bourget—France—Proust—André Gide. . . . The last day. I looked sadly at the house, already stacked with trunks; I should never see it again. The bell rang, and rang again. One after another, every quarter of an hour, I saw them arriving—Plug, Meyrovitz, Arlington, Robinson, McCarter. Some only came to say good-bye, others to consult me about their theses. Arlington wanted to write about Proust and Freudian psychology, Plug on Balzac and business, Meyrovitz on Stendhal's youth, Alexander on Flaubert, Proust and the objectivity of sentiments. Talking with them, I inwardly summarized my own impressions. Intelligent? Yes, these young men were very intelligent. Literary culture? Very much the same as that of a European of the same age; possibly even better-read. But they are almost totally lacking in historical culture and, except for Meyrovitz, they simply have no idea of what the construction and plan of a work can mean. This indifference to logical order in thought is an Anglo-Saxon trait, but I find it deeper amongst these Americans than in England. They are saved by their youth, by freshness of eye, by newness of words and imagery. A land of nascent poetry, of renascence. Their classical age will come in time.

Next day, in New York, I found a huge basket of white roses in my cabin—with a card. It was Alexander's.

## THREE PHANTOMS

I HAVE been spending three months in the Eastern States. Wherever I went, in autumnal woods, in the snow-covered plains, in the streets of New York or Boston, I met three phantoms. So real were they that I sometimes took them for living men.

I often found it hard, when walking the American countryside, to realize that I was separated from the European landscape by an ocean. Against an Ile-de-France blue the fluffy clouds sketched a sky of Corot's or Monet's. But as soon as the eye fell on a house the illusion faded. The American house is redolent of exotic, colonial savours. It is of wood, painted in a grey that is almost white, and it conjures up the films of Chaplin and the stories of the pioneers. To our eyes, accustomed to gauge the solidity of brick or stone, this wood looks slimy and provisional. A foreigner's mistake: woods here are durable, and many of these houses are old.

In the village graveyards the most worn of the tombstones bear venerable dates. *'Descended from an old English family—He abjured the glories of this World—To steld himself from Sin . . . Anno Domini 1669.'* In a Quaker burial-ground near Princeton the stones are unmarked; not so much as a name; no desire to cherish an earthly memory when salvation is all that matters. At the entrance to the ground is a wooden meeting-house, and behind it the pious farmers would tether their horses for shelter during meeting. An ascetic back-

ground, which must be evoked if one wishes to understand America.

The men who first landed on these shores of New England were Puritans who had left Europe because Puritanism was persecuted there. They made this perilous voyage in order to found the City of God. Their poetry came from the Bible, their morality from Calvin. For a long time their ministers of religion were also their political heads. And thus there took shape a breed of stern workers, virtuous and intolerant, capable of assuming the strict discipline which was to turn these waste lands and virgin forests into a great country.

That breed still lives. It no longer rules. Puritanism has been sapped by sundry influences, by comfort, by Latin immigration. Middle-class respectability, sentimentalism and prudery have blunted the fine rude vigour of its speech. Modern science has made a breach in its walls as a universal system. Biblical theology has been succeeded by a modernist religion, and amongst some by an absence of any religion. A recent enquiry in a Protestant seminary showed that only twenty out of a hundred future ministers believed in the damnation of unbelievers, and only eight in the literal inspiration of the Bible. The word 'sin' has almost vanished from the vocabulary of a 1931 American student. A New York preacher would hardly dare to use it, and it has been said by the Rev. Dr. Shelton, president of the Nation Bible Institute, that this omission of the word 'sin' from sermons is stupefying, considering that sin is a dominating word in the vocabulary of the Bible. Prohibition, a scion of Puritanism, has dealt its sire a mortal blow by making a vice into a rebellion. Habit and fondness have kept a great part of America loyal to the decencies of a family life; but here, there and everywhere, young rebel groups have tried to shake off the old law. Post-War cynicism has confronted nine-

teenth-century hypocrisy. The medical psychologists, disciples of Freud, aided this movement by providing desire with a vocabulary which enabled people to say anything and to vanquish the old inhibitions. Easy divorce has made marriage a legalized adventure. The descendants of the Puritans have been dabbles in the difficult profession of the libertine.

They have not enjoyed it. The frankest and best of them admit that they are ill at ease. The restless ghosts of the Pilgrim Fathers stalk abroad, and not only round the stones on the graveyard turf. These great Puritan souls are haunting minds which fancied themselves emancipated. The clear-eyed, scientific intelligence of many young Americans attaches no importance to the activities of love. It is a natural instinct which must be satisfied. But as soon as they allow a radicalism of the senses to rule their actions, then, to their surprise, a vexed and unfamiliar voice makes itself heard within them. The Puritan is pushing up his tombstone. The Statue is an ever-present guest at the orgies of a New Jersey Don Juan. As in the 'Tannhäuser', so in the American mind, the Pilgrims' Chorus mingles with the music of the Venusberg and distorts it with harsh discordances. Americans are at once shocked and fascinated by what they call French 'realism', the cynicism of a Maupassant hero. The reason why many of them drink is that only intoxication gives the desires strength to drown the Puritan voice. Many of them surrender after a few attempts. 'I have tried,' a young professor told me, 'but I'm not made for a life of freedom. Liberty is movement, and if I am sincere with myself my desire is for immobility. My need is to be quiet, to be in harmony with myself. I am irreligious in my brain, not in my heart.'

It is this clash which made the American of 1931 so interesting. It is he who has been the creator of a remarkable



young literature within a few years. America is looking for a morality. Babbitt himself, in his naïve way, is a character in search of a doctrine. When I was reading French novels with my pupils, it was a rule of life they sought rather than a subject of erudition. Bourget's 'Le Disciple' interested them because it sets a problem of free will. They prefer the French sixteenth century to the nineteenth, because it can show them frameworks and moralists.

For the generation reaching the age of twenty to-day is quite different from the one that reached that age just after the War. At that time, as Thomas Beer has remarked, there was mass production of rebels. A Bastille had to be razed every morning. But destroying a Bastille is not building a new city, and the best young minds are wondering what city of the mind they are going to build.

'My father and mother,' said one young student to me, 'lived in a very strict fashion. . . . I have had a great admiration for their life. There certainly was something bad in the 1880 hypocrisy, but there is plenty of hypocrisy in the aggressive liberty of to-day. . . .'

'Do many of your friends think like you?' I asked.

'Nearly all of them do,' he answered. 'Few dare to say so. . . . They talk about wine and women, but these things don't amuse them. . . .'

And for an instant I could see the austere features of the Puritan showing on his boyish face.

The seventeenth-century Puritan was in his way heroic. But the ghosts of heroes have not the virtues of heroes, and can only alarm the living. The Puritan ghost has inspired the United States electorate with stern and futile laws, outwardly contrived to tear out 'sin' from the human heart. The Puritan ghost has given the New York and Chicago police the task of converting millions of sinners into saints on the Last Day. Now, it is impossible to make the laws of a

great country from the conventions of a Methodist community. Walter Lippman has said that, sooner or later, America will have to bring back its legislative ideal to the point where it coincides with human nature. America will never find her moral equilibrium until she has at last exorcised the Puritan phantom.

The traveller crossing the plains of France, or the English countryside, recognizes a country in which the whole of the land's surface is occupied, and for centuries has been occupied, by man. Every village is a completed thing; one feels that it will hardly now grow any more, that it has found its form, linked to the road or the railway, to the fields and meadows that hem it round. In America the Frenchman emerging from a large town feels himself in the wilds. In Princeton, a small town for all its age, certain streets stop dead on the edge of a wilderness. The asphalt of a well-kept roadway is succeeded without any transition by the yellow grass stretching away to the horizon. The farther one goes from the coast, the more striking this impression becomes. Plains without one human being, vast lakes with small wooden houses on their edge, mere frameworks of towns, sketched rather than constructed, and where placards summon the inhabitants to a town-meeting, rocky valleys, snowy wastes,—a land where nature still holds sway, and which has just received its pioneers.

America is a precocious child, whose boldness and dexterity have made one forget its age. She is like one of those adolescent heirs to a great fortune, to whom the elders grudgingly grant a place in the family councils. She holds a majority of the Human Race company stock, but her youthfulness is terrifying. It was about 1810 that the New England farmers, suffering from the economic results of the Napoleonic Wars, came westward in their wide felt hats,

with guns slung on their backs and cartridges in their belts, to fell the forests of Indiana and Illinois, and built their first wooden shacks out there. It was in 1869 that two outlandish locomotives with cowcatchers met north of Salt Lake, and the Pacific Railroad made possible the development of the Far West. It was only yesterday that in any period of slump an American could still say, 'I'm off!'—and after a few days on horseback could find new territory, rich and unexploited, where land was given him open-handedly and where any vigorous man was welcome.

During the whole of the nineteenth century such a pioneer was the typical American. He then acquired the traits of character which are proper to founders. The pioneer is kindly, because to him a man is not a competitor but a partner in the war with nature. He is a lover of equality, because birth does not count in the wilderness. He esteems the man of action and looks askance on the dreamer, because in these still frail communities ceaseless activity is essential. He is chivalrous, because women are few and precious, and because in this poorly guarded land a religious respect for women is their sole protection. He hardly troubles about the central government and settles his affairs for himself; in the last resort his sheriff metes out rough and summary justice; sentences are carried out by his militia. He is a nomad, because he has found that the best remedy in case of misfortune is to move off. On political honesty he has not very strict notions, because the nomad, always ready to move away, has not the settled inhabitant's fear of the judgments of the local tribe. Finally, he is an optimist, because he lives in a country which has never failed him, and because he knows that a strong, bold man can always find success a little further on.

Such was the 'pioneer in space', the man of the ever-shifting frontier, whose wide-brimmed hat and galloping

horse and long rifle lent life to the films of 1912. But by then, in the real America, he was no more than a cinema hero. After the West he had managed to conquer the Far West. Then he had reached the other coast. Flight into the virgin forest, that romanticism in action, was becoming difficult. For a long time there had been born a new type of American in the East and the Middle West: the 'pioneer in Time', I shall call him, for it was in the future that he sought his free lands and virgin forests. Immigration and the birth-rate were quickly multiplying the population of the United States. All speculation (and speculation is always a forecasting of the future) seemed to be guaranteed by the accumulating value of the human capital. For new inventions new industries had to be created. The great game of action could go ahead. A few years ago the Spanish critic, Madariaga, compared America to a vast nursery stocked with marvellous toys. What giant Father Christmas invented the skyscraper? And who was the boy in Detroit who had the splendid notion of giving all the other boys a real car? To the creator of industry, as to the speculator and the banker, woman remained the distant, hardly visible being, to be worshipped and protected. The pioneer in time, until 1924 at any rate, was no less optimistic, individualist, chivalrous, boyish and generous as the pioneer in space had been.

And for a couple of years now it has looked as if the American, in this second dimension, had once again reached the last, unretreating frontier, the coast of the Over-production Ocean. He feels readier than ever to act, to create, to produce. But he can find no more partners to play the other part in the great game—that of consumer. None of the boys is willing to play the horse in the game any more. For the first time since the Pilgrim Fathers watched from their decks the first tokens of land—floating logs, wild birds, the

distant scent of woods—the astonished pioneers are wondering whether leisure will not become a duty. It is hard to say whether the present crisis really shows that saturation-point has been reached, and whether American prosperity will henceforth have to be static rather than dynamic. But that time will come, whether in 1932 or in 1950. The pioneer, in space as in time, is a genus doomed by his own success.

We may regret him: he had at once the charm and the awkwardness of happiness. But it is impossible to preserve the traits of childhood in a country which has come of age. Here and there, in a new industry, or in some difficult territory, pioneers will be left; but the men of the nation will have to acquire the habits of the sedentary. The primitive optimism is already visibly waning in the Eastern States. Culture is spreading, and bringing with it, as usual, the painful but healthy sense of doubt. Feminine domination is not ended, but its approaching end can be foreseen in an easier code of morals, the greater zest of young men for thought, and the economic competition of the sexes. The American woman, like the European, will have to learn other methods in order to retain her superiority. Already she is feeling her way towards that. 'But men don't live their lives like that,' my pupils would say when we read *'La Princesse de Clèves'*. 'Men don't waste time in discussing shades of sentiment with women. . . . Love doesn't hold such an important place in life.'—'Just wait,' I told them. 'Your seventeenth century is still to come. Only yesterday you were living in the days of Chrestien de Troyes and chivalrous love. . . . With age and leisure you will see the appearance of your own *Princesse de Clèves*, your own *Nouvelle Héloïse*, your own *Bovary*.'

The period of adjustment will be difficult. The pioneer, superannuated by success, will for some decades be like those

old officers of the Napoleonic armies, put on half-pay by 1815 and dreaming all their lives of their past glories. An apprenticeship in leisure is hard for the man of action. But the Pioneer, like the Puritan, will slowly be exorcised. 'America comes of age'—the title of Siegfried's book is exact in its image. That noisy childhood is at an end.

In most human groups one can see the emergence above the generality of men of various chiefs or nobles, to whom certain privileges are allowed by the people in exchange for certain services. At first the nobleman's rôle is principally that of the warlike leader. Whether by strength and courage, or by skill and duplicity, he protects his vassals and leads them to victory. At a later stage the feudal lord maintains internal order. He safeguards the people of his domains against the onslaughts of other lords; he gives support to judges and forbids acts of violence amongst his subjects.

As soon as order becomes the accepted condition in a country, the people, ungratefully but reasonably, come to see that the lord presents as many drawbacks as he does advantages. Admittedly, he is a shield against the other seigneurs. But he takes rather too keen a delight in these virtuous combats; all too often he provokes his neighbours and kindles conflict. Besides, he is expensive: his descendants and successors have generally neither the strength nor the caution of their ancestor; the wars of castle against castle endanger humble folk; and so, with the centuries, there is born a desire to get rid of him. No sooner do improved weapons make his castle and his armour vulnerable, than the masses begin to rally to a central government, and that is the end of the great feudal rulers. Useful they have been; they are useful no longer; and they stand condemned. Such was the history of France; such will be the history of America, which, in very many respects, is still in the feudal stage.

One respect which particularly strikes the European in America is the lack of a central government. The Federal Government in Washington has nothing in common, for instance, with a single focus of power like the Government in Paris, as bequeathed to the French Republic by those two great centralizers, Louis XIV and Napoleon. Some of the most important organs of a European government simply do not exist in America. There is, for example, no national Minister of Education. 'What about it?' asks the American. 'There's one in each State.' True, but that multiplicity makes any unity in programme or teaching an impossibility. Moreover, even in the several States, that Minister is not in control of the better universities, which are private institutions. The President, the great parties, State Governors, Senators—all these powers in the various States are dependent in the final analysis on what were termed, in the France of Louis XI, the great vassals.

These great feudal barons of America are money barons. They belong to nobilities of varying origins. Some have reached greatness legally, outwardly at least: lords of banking, industry and commerce. Together with the Pioneer and the Puritan they have been the makers of this great country, and many of their families form an aristocracy very like the families of European monarchies. *Mutatis mutandis*, their code of morality is closely akin to that of the medieval lords. They enjoy a fight—bank against bank, trust against trust, price-cut against price-thrust. In an industrial age a tourney can only be economic. They are courteous and friendly, and after splintering lances in the lists of Wall Street they will meet face to face at the dinner-table, amongst the ladies, in the Park Avenue keeps. Their medieval counterparts endowed monasteries; these barons endow colleges and stipulate the saying of prayers for the founder, just like an English Henry or a French Dagobert.

This pattern of financial feudalism exists also in Europe, although there it meets with more resistance than in the United States from less submissive political parties and from organized bureaucracies. But alongside the nobility of wealth there is growing up in America a nobility of adventurers which in Europe has almost completely vanished. Like the Italians in French sixteenth-century politics, the Irish of Timinany Hall, the great Democratic or Republican bosses, have carved out a place for themselves amongst the national forces. In the formation of this class bootlegging has played the part of the pirates and nomadic raiders who founded the Norman nobility. The Chicago racketeer is a feudal figure. He threatens the merchant and obtains yearly tribute from him, giving in exchange his protection against other bandits. 'He sells you peace,' an American writer has said: that is exactly what our European lords sold too.

Al Capone is a more powerful and less cruel Gilles de Rais, surrounded like the French Bluebeard by his armed retinue, although Al Capone's bodyguard wear dinner-jackets and have machine guns mounted in their cars. On December 14, 1930, Al Capone, Prince of Chicago, married his sister Mafalda to the brother of Frank Diamond, another powerful lord of Illinois. Like most royal matches this marriage had been suggested by political advisers and imposed on bride and bridegroom by the heads of the families, and of the armed forces, who with admirable prudence were anxious to tighten the bonds between their fiefs and avoid dangerous rivalries between their vassals. The ceremony took place in church at Cicero, Illinois, a town in the Capone domains. The young heiress wore an ivory satin gown with a train twenty five feet long. The church was packed with four thousand guests, for whom the two rival gangs had combined to provide yellow and white chrysanthemums. Behind the pillars stood gunmen, their hands in their revolver pockets,



anxiously scrutinizing the movements of everyone coming near their masters. The majestic tones of the organ brought tears to the eyes of many of these worthies. Outside the church waited the loyal and fearful throng, greedy for a glimpse of so many heroes.

Why does this warrior feudality retain a power and prestige in America which it has long since lost amongst ourselves? How does the American public amusedly put up with tournaments so dangerous to the onlookers? These are questions which the surprised European asks. He is amazed, for instance, to read in his newspaper of how hold-up men, after armed robbery in broad daylight in one of New York's busiest streets, have been able to escape in a car before the eyes of an indifferent crowd. If a committee of citizens is convoked in some great city to check the 'crime wave', the European is dumbfounded to observe that no enthusiasm is roused by so needful a crusade. Later, when he is more familiar with the country, he realizes that as the conception of a central power, the State, is infinitely weaker in America than in Europe, there duels of gang-leaders are viewed by the man-in-the-street very much as those of a Montmorency were by an ordinary Frenchman before the time of Richelieu. As for merchants submitted to racketeering, they are in this respect like medieval serfs, preferring the prospect of comparative peace under the thralldom of Al Capone to the protection of a rather powerless police.

But the citizen will tire of these noisy and dangerous games. The natural evolution of the United States is at present hampered by the absurd Prohibition laws, which make half of the population accomplices in fraud. That situation cannot be lasting. If the East alone were consulted, Prohibition would to-day be abrogated. The Methodists of the Middle West would be harder to convince; but sooner or later they will have to learn that a régime which makes

the richest and most powerful into evaders of the law is compromising the very existence of the State. When that happens, public opinion will abandon its support of the robber barons, and they will disappear.

As for the economic feudalism, I believe that that also is bound in the end to recognize a central power stronger than itself. Economic machinery has become too complex to be left at the mercy of private bickerings. In days when one scientific discovery can within a few months rob thousands of workers of their livelihood, it is essential that a strong authority should be able to supervise its application. In days when the money of humble people is invested in large enterprises, a strict control must necessarily be exercised by representatives of the investors. Willy-nilly, the United States will be led, like Europe, though more slowly, to a strengthening of the central power. But as the Americans have a liking for new formulas, and have the courage to apply them, it would not surprise me to see them inventing a new form of the State, wherein great organizations of workers, producers and consumers, will regulate the country's economic life, and do so quite distinctly from the political parliamentary body. Such, I believe, was also the view of Keyserling. But whatever the form of this central power of the future, the feudal lord, like the Puritan and the pioneer, is bound to alter or to disappear.

They are phantoms, these three, because their kind cannot adapt itself to the world as it is now being shaped. Like all ghosts, they have, and will long have, a real existence in the minds of the living.

It is after the death of certain persons that we realize how large a part they have played in our lives. I do not bemoan the occult presence of the three phantoms. It infuses the American atmosphere with the inconvenience and mystery

which enhance the present with the weight and substance of the past. But their image fades and fades. 'What city of the future are we going to raise?' asks the young American. None can foretell. But in that city where the men of 1931 will in their turn be the ghosts, there will certainly be no room for the three phantoms, already paling so fast, of pre-War America.

## AMERICANS IN CRISIS

IT has happened that two journeys have given me the opportunity of observing the behaviour of the American people in times of prosperity and in times of crisis. The differences were interesting and noteworthy, and possibly enable one to deduce a few general laws regarding the economic behaviour of crowds.

### (1)

The first characteristic which struck the visitor to America before the slump of 1929 was an extraordinary confidence in the future. Nearly every American one met had, during the years 1922-8, succeeded in what he had undertaken. If they were engaged in industry or commerce they told you how the figures of their production or turnover had, in many cases, been doubled or tripled. If they were wage-earners, their wages or rates had risen. Even if they were novelists, the sales of their books reached figures which to a European seemed astronomical. All, or very nearly all, were speculating, and had a friend who had 'put them on to a good thing'. That stock had risen, all stocks had risen, and next summer they were going to take a trip to Europe.

When a whole human herd is strongly imbued with optimism of this kind, the isolated member of the herd who tries to oppose that optimism is regarded as a traitor. Which is quite natural. Optimism is a pleasant sensation, and was all the more so in America's case because it extended to the common classes of society, so that the wealthy were able to give themselves up to it with neither remorse nor

anxiety. If a few wise men endeavoured to remind people of all-too obvious economic laws, and to show that prices had reached a point where the whole of world credit could not support them, or to evoke memories of previous slumps, the public waxed indignant. 'Things were quite different nowadays; we were entering on a new era. Big wages allied with mass production would enable mankind to scale the topmost peaks of prosperity.' Prudence and reflection were words of treason. If thinking led to doubts, thought was criminal. In the colleges during those days the man who reflected was regarded by the average student as dangerous. Sport held absolute sway, because sport is a deterrent to thought. The will to optimism brooked no contradiction.

The happy result of this optimism was a great and universal generosity. I had occasion at that time to observe certain charity subscriptions in small towns. People gave not only gladly, but almost luxuriating in their bounty. There was a kind of heady pleasure in flinging away some part of this money which was rising in waves round every American faster than he could spend it. Universities, hospitals, the rebuilding of European towns—everything shared in this largesse. Spending was the great national game. People sought out new objects just for the sake of an opportunity of buying. It was the time when Big Business was exerting itself to meet the public 'radio-conscious', or 'car-conscious'. Nor was it hard to create such demands: people then only wanted the chance of desiring something. The publicity 'stimulus' automatically produced the 'buying' reaction. Like pessimism, economy would have been held criminal.

Naturally, then, the statesmen and business magnates lucky enough to be in power at that moment reaped the benefit of the popularity always attached to success. A victorious general is a general who is present on the day of a

great victory. 'Love', says Spinoza, 'is joy accompanied by the idea of an external cause.' When a people feels happy, it loves its leaders. In this battle of non-existent adversaries, Calvin Coolidge was the strategist favoured by the gods. The Wall Street prophets then commanded an almost religious awe. They foretold a rise, and a rise occurred; therefore they were true prophets. It was a time when any man was acclaimed who told the American people: 'We have more locomotives, more automobiles, and more frigidaires per head of the population than any nation in the world.' I remember at that time hearing a preacher reading statistics of production from the pulpit to prove the loving-kindness of Heaven.

A prosperous people never desire state intervention in private affairs. At the time of my first visit America was the least socialistic country in the world. There was no unemployment legislation as in England or Germany, no civil servants' statute or workers' pensions as in France. The individual was too successful to need any protection. If he had any fears for the future, there were countless stable insurance corporations ready to do business with him. When Keyserling then wrote about the United States he had to coin a word, 'privatism', to express the extreme economic individualism of the 1928 American.

This prosperity engendered feelings of indifference, and often of contempt, towards Europe. Indifference, because American prosperity seemed to be independent of European prosperity. The United States was large enough to buy up the fruits of their own productivity. Besides, the U.S.A. was essential for the rebuilding of that unhappy continent always at war with itself. Contempt, because Europe seemed incapable of grasping the elementary truths which had brought happiness to America. Why did not Europe abolish its absurd little frontiers? Why didn't it adopt the policy of

high wages? In a few industries (the motor-car in France, shoes in Czechoslovakia, electricity in Germany) Europe tried to adopt American methods of production, but the absence of high wages meant a lack of consumers. In those days an American of the Babbitt type (and it was the period of the widest diffusion of Babbitttry) could scarcely speak to a European without preaching to him, like a mature man to a lad. And the result was that the European, rubbed up the wrong way, called down curses on American vainglory, and did not detect the charming qualities of confidence and generosity which went hand-in-hand with that pride.

Finally the traveller at that time would discover in America a small group of rebels, striving rather unhappily and vainly to react against the herd optimism. The herd treated them badly, and, as always happens, their violence was increased by repression. They could be seen in the colleges flaunting their open shirts, *à la* Shelley, in opposition to the stricter costume of the orthodox. All thought took the form of challenge. The opposition was more harsh and satiric than constructive. Morality became free, but without depth of freedom, I mean, that natural spontaneous freedom to be seen, for example, in the heroes of Maupassant. Deeds were bold, but hearts remained puritan. In sexual as in intellectual life, the reaction was one of defiance rather than sincere conviction.

Another psychological link, more hidden, joined up sexual freedom with economic prosperity. This was the need for excitement which is necessarily engendered by wealth. The link is easy to account for. The man who satisfies every desire as soon as he feels it, is no longer capable of accumulating in his life those long periods of waiting which make true passions: that waiting for money which makes a Père Grandet in Balzac, that waiting for love which makes a Madame Bovary. He craves for a constant series of

strong sensations. Speedy change replaces intensity of desire. This is one of the greatest dangers that prosperity brings to happiness. This was more or less the conduct of *Homo Americanus*, so far as a foreign naturalist could observe him during a journey through the Eastern States of the continent in 1927.

(II)

If the same naturalist returned to New York in 1931, watched the actions of the same 'subjects' he studied four years before, and listened to their conversation, he would be surprised to observe how greatly the crisis had altered them.

I shall begin with an observation simply of the outward scene. About Christmas, 1927, I made a round of the New York stores, and I returned to them in December, 1931. The difference was almost incredible. In a certain large bookstore in 1927 it was impossible to find a salesman, in 1931, the shop was almost empty. The husband whom I had seen giving his wife a Christmas present of an exquisite piece of jewellery, now bought her a small object of no value which he would never have dared to show her four years since. The family who, as I knew, came to Paris every winter were now cancelling the trip for economy's sake.

I allow myself these quite commonplace observations in order to reach a very important point touching 'behaviour' in times of crisis: namely, that most of the people whose altered courses of action I was examining had no real need to make these economies. Many of them had lost nothing. All, or nearly all of them, in spite of losses, were still extremely rich people, much more so than the majority of Europeans. Why then were they hesitating to spend here ten dollars or here a hundred, sums which meant nothing to them?

For two reasons. The first was that their confidence in the future had been affected. The slump has, for a time at least,



shattered American optimism. Before the crisis it was easy, by applying the appropriate stimulus, to rouse the American's desire to buy. The stimulus has now to be far stronger to obtain the same response. On the other hand, a new desire, totally unknown in America, has been brought into being—the desire for security. There is a French proverb which says that 'a scalded cat dreads cold water'. A man who has lost his fortune in bad investments is afraid of *any* investment. In 1927 my American taxi-drivers were always telling me about the money they were going to spend. One of them told me he wanted to go to Paris, but that he was waiting until he had \$3,000 because he wanted to travel first-class. In 1931 he spoke with horror of the failure of the Bank of the United States, and talked earnestly about savings banks under adequate State control. If there is still one thing which it is easy to sell to the people of the United States at the present time, it is security. In that market the slightest stimulus provokes an instant response.

But why this instinct of amassing on the part of the rich, who have no real anxiety regarding the security of their future? Because when the whole of a human herd has a strong sensation of pessimism or uneasiness, the isolated member of the herd who flaunts his good fortune is regarded as a traitor. Just as in Europe during the War, those families who had lost one of their members, or feared the loss of one, watched with a very natural sense of annoyance the tranquillity of those who were then said to have 'cushy jobs', so, under the influence of the slump, the American mass cannot be sympathetic towards the individual who has not felt its effects. The human animal is extremely sensitive to these herd feelings, and reacts very quickly to them. The quality called tact is simply a swift and silent awareness of the hidden feelings of others. It is tact, a sense of shame, and an in-

stinctive prudence, that make the wealthiest men at the present time make a pretence of being hurt. There is a pleasure in sharing the herd's suffering, and a contrasting sense of shame in enjoying things apart from it.

This psychological explanation is so true that it was clearly perceived by the publicity experts, who strive to fight it by demonstrating that patriotism, the general interest, and the welfare of the working classes, must be served by spending. I saw in New York numerous propaganda films designed to prove to the public that the man who invests his money instead of spending it deserves the contempt of the crowd. But these films had little effect. Not until the wealthy classes begin to feel that purchasing power is again normal amongst the poorer classes, will they themselves again feel able to spend without a sense of remorse.

During the recent crisis, that desire to delude oneself into a feeling of having done something to help the herd, took rather perilously sentimental forms. I must say I was shocked by the sight of the ten thousand men selling apples on the New York streets. That was not a remedy for unemployment; it was the illusion of a remedy. The unemployed men were becoming beggars disguised as traders. For five cents the purchasers had the pleasant illusion of being openhanded and helping to cure the national sickness. But they had done nothing, and for the most part were far from having contributed to the unemployment fund a sum proportional to their means. Consequently, it was very bad psychology to let them acquire an easy conscience at so cheap a rate. The notion of salvation through apples was a deplorable survival of the sentimental optimism which ruled America before the slump.

Fortunately for the United States that optimism has yielded place to a spirit at once more critical, more objective, and more healthy. Through the crisis, intelligence has re-

covered its value. It has been made clear that to be 'a regular guy' is not qualification enough for the conduct of big business. Men have begun to pass under stern scrutiny reputations and declarations which in the days of prosperity were accepted as self-evident. When the Wall Street prophets announced for the first time that the end of the slump was at hand, people were tempted to believe them—an old habit acquired under prosperity. When the first prophecy did not come to pass, the American public were astonished; when the second proved false the same public smiled. The third made it indignant; and now whenever the false prophets open their lips, the average American shrugs his shoulders, and the humorist Will Rogers begs the economists to do no more foretelling of 'happy days' being here again, because, he says, that would bring bad luck. An intelligent scepticism is spreading. When an orator tells the American people to-day that they are the happiest in the world because they have so many locomotives and trucks and radios, they turn away bored.

Statesmen unlucky enough to be in power during a crisis are held responsible for the public woes. A defeated general is a general who was present on the day of a great defeat. Mr. Robert Marshall has shown that the Presidential elections in the United States depend on rainfall. This is quite natural. Drought means bad harvests. Bad harvests and poor business beget general discontent and political changes.

In times of crisis the individual, being menaced, seeks the protection of the herd. The power of the State is augmented because everyone desires protection. The United States is an individualist country, but in 1930 was falling back on a form of agricultural socialism for their farmers. On every hand the most intelligent business men are asking for agreed understandings in questions of production, and some even desire such understandings to be international. Scorn and

indifference regarding European affairs have been replaced by a very keen interest. The Texas planter observes that he cannot sell his cotton to English factories whose hands are idle. The processions of unemployed men teach the American capitalist that Bolshevism in Europe would have grave consequences for himself. The Senate in Washington is still a long way from the realization that America's true interest lies in her becoming part of the League of Nations and helping to safeguard the peace of the world; but the slump has set America on the road towards an understanding with Europe. Add to this the fact that Europe has felt more sympathetic towards America since the crisis; for nations, like individuals, crave to feel that they are not alone in their sufferings.

What was the result of the crisis on the small group of rebels whom we observed in 1927? It would appear that it has drawn this group closer to the herd, or more exactly, that the mass had drawn closer to this group. Men in general are beginning to see that the rebels were right in declaring that there were other things in human life beyond prosperity. Having less money for the pleasures of excitement, they turn towards the pleasures of culture. This, of course, is true as yet only of a select minority; but, for example, in the universities of the Eastern States one no longer finds the young intellectuals spurned by the athletes. The result is that the intellectual ceases to be a rebel and becomes more constructive.

It is too soon to judge what the effects of the crisis have been on sexual behaviour. But I should not be surprised to find it tending to bring back the most emancipated Americans towards a more traditional mode of life, were it only for economic reasons. Frequent divorce and alimony payments are hobbies for people with a superfluity of ready cash.

## (iii)

It is clear, then, that the crisis has altered the reactions of *Homo Americanus* at many points. In my opinion the transformation has been operating in a favourable direction; the slump has made the American more mature and more sensible. It remains to ask whether its effects will be lasting.

We must not, I think, here pitch our hopes too high. The experiences which produce deep changes in us are those which are sufficiently recurrent to become habits. The child learns to walk or to eat because he carries out the movements every day. A unique experience teaches little. Now, the great economic crises of the past have always been bridged by periods of prosperity, lasting for seven, eight, or ten years. This is an interval of time long enough for man to become forgetful. The much more terrible and much more important experience of war itself seems always to have been forgotten by humanity after one generation. Who remembers to-day all the wise reflections aroused in our fathers by the crises of 1876, or 1893, or 1907, or 1929?

The present crisis will probably be succeeded by a wave of rising prices and wealth, and perhaps it will sweep away all the new-found wisdom of America. Nevertheless, in the course of the centuries, men have learned a few lessons. It would astonish me if everything of the last three years' teaching were lost. America is young, but she has grown older and riper since 1929. She is reaching that fine but difficult age when, for peoples as for individuals, grown-up responsibilities succeed the optimistic illusions of childhood and the rebellious pessimism of adolescence. She will pass through other crises, like the one which is now working itself out; and we shall pass through them with her. Her friends hope that she will face up to each of them always a little wiser and better prepared. When a rat is brought back, after

a long interval, beside the box of foodstuffs which it has formerly learned how to open, it appears at first to have forgotten its past experience, but the observer soon finds that, notwithstanding appearances, the animal remembers, the proof being the fact that it now discovers much more quickly than the first time how to get access to the box. And humanity is like an undying animal brought back every ten or twelve years, by some powerful and invisible investigator, to be confronted by the complex mechanism of economic crisis. In spite of its apparent madness, it does not totally forget past experience.

person in the other courts and had contained the  
in compliments of the Lord Chief Justice on my conduct  
my own case, Sir George Jessel's pretended astonish-  
ment seemed a little overdone. After a variety of similar  
remarks delivered in the most grating tones and in the  
hughest manner, Sir George Jessel tried to obtain his  
object by browbeating me directly.

"Is this the lady?"

"I am the respondent, my lord, Mrs. Besant."

"Then I advise you, Mrs. Besant, to employ counsel  
to represent you, if you can afford it; and I suppose you  
can."

"With all submission to your lordship, I am afraid I  
must claim my right of arguing my case in person."

"You will do so if you please, of course, but I think  
you had much better appear by counsel. I give you  
notice that, if you do not, you must not expect to be shown  
any consideration. You will not be heard by me at any  
greater length than the case requires, nor allowed to go  
into irrelevant matter, as persons who argue their own cases  
usually do."

"I trust I shall not do so, my lord; but in any case I  
shall be arguing under your lordship's complete control."

This encouraging beginning may be taken as a sample  
of the case—it was one long fight against clever counsel,  
aided by a counsel instead of a judge on the bench. Only  
once did judge and counsel fall out. Mr. Ince and

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Mr Bardswell had been arguing that my Atheism and Malthusianism made me an unfit guardian for my child, Mr Ince declared that Mabel, educated by me, would "be helpless for good in this world, and "hopeless for good hereafter, outcast in this life and damned in the next" Mr Bardswell implored the judge to consider that my custody of her 'would be detrimental to the future prospects of the child in society to say nothing of her eternal prospects' Had not the matter been to me of such heart-breaking importance, I could have laughed at the mixture of Mrs Grundy, marriage establishment, and hell, presented as an argument for robbing a mother of her child But Mr Bardswell carelessly forgot that Sir George Jessel was a Jew, and lifting eyes to heaven in horrified appeal, he gasped out

"Your lordship, I think will scarcely credit it, but Mrs Besant says, in a later affidavit, that she took away the Testament from the child because it contained coarse passages unfit for a child to read

The opportunity was too tempting for a Jew to refrain from striking at a book written by apostate Jews, and Sir George Jessel answered sharply

"It is not true to say there are no passages unfit for a child's reading, because I think there are a great many'

"I do not know of any passages that could fairly be called coarse

"I cannot quite assent to that "



Barring this little episode judge and counsel showed a charming unanimity. I distinctly said I was an Atheist, that I had withdrawn the child from religious instruction at the day-school she attended, that I had written various anti-Christian books, and so on; but I claimed the child's custody on the ground that the deed of separation distinctly gave it to me, and had been executed by her father after I had left the Christian Church, and that my opinions were not sufficient to invalidate it. It was admitted on the other side that the child was admirably cared for, and there was no attempt at attacking my personal character. The judge stated that I had taken the greatest possible care of the child, but decided that the mere fact of my refusing to give the child religious instruction was sufficient ground for depriving me of her custody. Secular education he regarded as "not only reprehensible, but detestable, and likely to work utter ruin to the child, and I certainly should upon this ground alone decide that this child ought not to remain another day under the care of her mother."

Sir George Jessel denounced also my Malthusian views in a fashion at once so brutal and so untruthful as to facts, that some years later another judge, the senior puisne judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, declared in a judgment delivered in his own court that there was "no language used by Lord Cockburn which justified the Master of the Rolls in assuming that Lord Cockburn regarded the book as obscene," and that "little weight is to be attached to his opinion on a point not submitted for his

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decision', he went on to administer a sharp rebuke for the way in which Sir George Jessel travelled outside the case and remarked that "abuse, however, of an unpopular opinion, whether indulged in by judges or other people, is not argument nor can the vituperation of opponents in opinion prove them to be immoral. However, Sir George Jessel was all-powerful in his own court and he deprived me of my child refusing to stay the order even until the hearing of my appeal against his decision. A messenger from the father came to my house and the little child was carried away by main force, shrieking and struggling still weak from the fever and nearly frantic with fear and passionate resistance. No access to her was given me and I gave notice that if access were denied me, I would sue for a restitution of conjugal rights, merely that I might see my children. But the strain had been too great, and I nearly went mad spending hours pacing up and down the empty rooms striving to weary myself to exhaustion that I might forget.

The loneliness and silence of the house, of which my darling had always been the sunshine and the music, weighed on me like an evil dream. I listened for the patter of the dancing feet, and merry, thrilling laughter that rang through the garden, the sweet music of the childish voice, during my sleepless nights I missed in the darkness the soft breathing of the little child, each morning I longed in vain for the clinging arms and soft, sweet kisses. At last health broke down, and fever struck me, and mercifully

gave me the rest of pain and delirium instead of the agony of conscious loss. Through that terrible illness, day after day, Mr. Bradlaugh came to me, and sat writing beside me, feeding me with ice and milk, refused from all others, and behaving more like a tender mother than a man friend; he saved my life, though it seemed to me for awhile of little value, till the first months of lonely pain were over. When recovered, I took steps to set aside an order obtained by Mr. Besant during my illness, forbidding me to bring any suit against him, and even the Master of the Rolls, on hearing that all access had been denied to me, and the money due to me stopped, uttered words of strong condemnation of the way in which I had been treated. Finally the deed of separation executed in 1873 was held to be good as protecting Mr. Besant from any suit brought by me, whether for divorce or for restitution of conjugal rights, while the clauses giving me the custody of the child were set aside. The Court of Appeal in April, 1879, upheld the decision, the absolute right of the father as against a married mother being upheld. This ignoring of all right to her children on the part of the married mother is a scandal and a wrong that has since been redressed by Parliament, and the husband has no longer in his grasp this instrument of torture, whose power to agonise depends on the tenderness and strength of the motherliness of the wife. In the days when the law took my child from me, it virtually said to all women: "Choose which of these two positions, as wife and mother, you will occupy. If you are legally your

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husband's wife, you can have no legal claim to your children, if legally you are your husband's mistress, your rights as mother are secure' That stigma on marriage is now removed

One thing I gained in the Court of Appeal The Court expressed a strong view as to my right of access, and directed me to apply to Sir George Jessel for it, adding that it could not doubt he would grant it Under cover of this I applied to the Master of the Rolls, and obtained liberal access to the children, but I found that my visits kept Mabel in a continual state of longing and fretting for me, while the ingenious forms of petty insult that were devised against me and used in the children's presence would soon become palpable to them and cause continual pain So, after a painful struggle with myself, I resolved to give up the right of seeing them feeling that thus only could I save them from constantly recurring conflict, destructive of all happiness and of all respect for one or the other parent Resolutely I turned my back on them that I might spare them trouble, and determined that, robbed of my own, I would be a mother to all helpless children I could aid, and cure the pain at my own heart by soothing the pain of others

As far as regards this whole struggle over the Knowlton pamphlet, victory was finally won all along the line Not only did we, as related, recover all our seized pamphlets, and continue the sale till all prosecution and threat of prosecution were definitely surrendered, but my own tract had an enormous sale, so that when I withdrew it from sale

in June, 1891, I was offered a large sum for the copyright, an offer which I, of course, refused. Since that time not a copy has been sold with my knowledge or permission, but long ere that the pamphlet had received a very complete legal vindication. For while it circulated untouched in England, a prosecution was attempted against it in New South Wales, but was put an end to by an eloquent and luminous judgment by the senior puisne judge of the Supreme Court, Mr. Justice Windmeyer, in December, 1888. This judge, the most respected in the great Australian colony, spoke out plainly and strongly on the morality of such teaching.

“Take the case,” he said, “of a woman married to a drunken husband, steadily ruining his constitution and hastening to the drunkard’s doom, loss of employment for himself, semi-starvation for his family, and finally death, without a shilling to leave those whom he has brought into the world, but armed with the authority of the law to treat his wife as his slave, ever brutally insisting on the indulgence of his marital rights. Where is the immorality, if, already broken in health from unresting maternity, having already a larger family than she can support when the miserable breadwinner has drunk himself to death, the woman avails herself of the information given in this book, and so averts the consequences of yielding to her husband’s brutal insistence on his marital rights? Already weighted with a family that she is unable to decently bring up, the immorality, it seems to me, would be in the reckless and criminal

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disregard of precautions which would prevent her bringing into the world daughters whose future outlook as a career would be prostitution or sons whose inherited taint of alcoholism would soon drag them down with their sisters to herd with the seething mass of degenerate and criminal humanity that constitutes the dangerous classes of great cities. In all these cases the appeal is from thoughtless unreasoning prejudice to conscience and if listened to its voice will be heard unmistakably indicating where the path of duty lies.

The judge forcibly refused to be any party to the prohibition of such a pamphlet, regarding it as of high service to the community. He said: "So strong is the dread of the world's censure upon this topic that few have the courage openly to express their views upon it, and its nature is such that it is only amongst thinkers who discuss all subjects or amongst intimate acquaintances that community of thought upon the question is discovered. But let any one inquire amongst those who have sufficient education and ability to think for themselves and who do not idly float slaves to the current of conventional opinion and he will discover that numbers of men and women of purest lives, of noblest aspirations, pious, cultivated and refined, see no wrong in teaching the ignorant that it is wrong to bring into the world children to whom they cannot do justice, and who think it folly to stop short in telling them simply and plainly how to prevent it. A more robust view of morals teaches that it is puerile to ignore human

passions and human physiology. A clearer perception of truth and the safety of trusting to it teaches that in law, as in religion, it is useless trying to limit the knowledge of mankind by any inquisitorial attempts to place upon a judical Index Expurgatorius works written with an earnest purpose, and commending themselves to thinkers of well-balanced minds. I will be no party to any such attempt. I do not believe that it was ever meant that the Obscene Publication Act should apply to cases of this kind, but only to the publication of such matter as all good men would regard as lewd and filthy, to lewd and bawdy novels, pictures and exhibitions, evidently published and given for lucre's sake. It could never have been intended to stifle the expression of thought by the earnest-minded on a subject of transcendent national importance like the present, and I will not strain it for that purpose. As pointed out by Lord Cockburn in the case of the Queen v. Bradlaugh and Besant, all prosecutions of this kind should be regarded as mischievous, even by those who disapprove the opinions sought to be stifled, inasmuch as they only tend more widely to diffuse the teaching objected to. To those, on the other hand, who desire its promulgation, it must be a matter of congratulation that this, like all attempted persecutions of thinkers, will defeat its own object, and that truth, like a torch, 'the more it's shook it shines.' "

The argument of Mr. Justice Windmeyer for the Neo-Malthusian position was (as any one may see who reads the

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full text of the judgment) one of the most luminous and cogent I have ever read. The judgment was spoken of at the time in the English press as a "brilliant triumph for Mrs Besant," and so I suppose it was, but no legal judgment could undo the harm wrought on the public mind in England by malignant and persistent misrepresentation. What that trial and its results cost me in pain no one but myself will ever know, on the other hand, there was the passionate gratitude evidenced by letters from thousands of poor married women—many from the wives of country clergymen and curates—thanking and blessing me for showing them how to escape from the veritable hell in which they lived. The "upper classes" of society know nothing about the way in which the poor live, how their overcrowding destroys all sense of personal dignity, of modesty, of outward decency, till human life, as Bishop Fraser justly said, is "degraded below the level of the swine." To such, and among such I went, and I could not grudge the price that then seemed to me as the ransom for their redemption. To me, indeed, it meant the losing of all that made life dear, but for them it seemed to be the gaining of all that gave hope of a better future. So how could I hesitate—I whose heart had been fired by devotion to an ideal Humanity, inspired by that Materialism that is of love and not of hate?

And now, in August, 1893, we find the *Christian World*, the representative organ of orthodox Christian Protestantism, proclaiming the right and the duty of



voluntary limitation of the family. In a leading article, after a number of letters had been inserted, it said :

“ The conditions are assuredly wrong which bring one member of the married partnership into a bondage so cruel. It is no less evident that the cause of the bondage in such cases lies in the too rapid multiplication of the family. There was a time when any idea of voluntary limitation was regarded by pious people as interfering with Providence. We are beyond that now, and have become capable of recognising that Providence works through the common sense of individual brains. We limit population just as much by deferring marriage from prudential motives as by any action that may be taken after it. . . . Apart from certain methods of limitation, the morality of which is gravely questioned by many, there are certain easily-understood physiological laws of the subject, the failure to know and to observe which is inexcusable on the part either of men or women in these circumstances. It is worth noting in this connection that Dr. Billings, in his article in this month's *Forum*, on the diminishing birth-rate of the United States, gives as one of the reasons the greater diffusion of intelligence, by means of popular and school treatises on physiology, than formerly prevailed.”

Thus has opinion changed in sixteen years, and all the obloquy poured on us is seen to have been the outcome of ignorance and bigotry.

As for the children, what was gained by their separation from me? The moment they were old enough to free

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themselves, they came back to me my little girl's too brief stay with me being ended by her happy marriage, and I fancy the fears expressed for her eternal future will prove as groundless as the fears for her temporal ruin have proved to be! Not only so but both are treading in my steps as regards their views of the nature and destiny of man, and have joined in their bright youth the Theosophical Society to which after so many struggles I won my way

The struggle on the right to discuss the prudential restraint of population did not, however conclude without a martyr Mr Edward Truelove alluded to above, was prosecuted for selling a treatise by Robert Dale Owen on "Moral Physiology, and a pamphlet entitled, "Individual, Family, and National Poverty He was tried on February 1. 1878, before the Lord Chief Justice in the Court of Queen's Bench, and was most ably defended by Professor W A Hunter The jury spent two hours in considering their verdict, and returned into court and stated that they were unable to agree The majority of the jury were ready to convict, if they felt sure that Mr Truelove would not be punished, but one of them boldly declared in court "As to the book, it is written in plain language for plain people, and I think that many more persons ought to know what the contents of the book are The jury was discharged, in consequence of this one man's courage, but Mr Truelove's persecutors—the Vice Society—were determined not to let their victim free They proceeded to trial

a second time, and wisely endeavoured to secure a special jury, feeling that as prudential restraint would raise wages by limiting the supply of labour, they would be more likely to obtain a verdict from a jury of "gentlemen" than from one composed of workers. This attempt was circumvented by Mr. Truelove's legal advisers, who let a *procedendo* go which sent back the trial to the Old Bailey. The second trial was held on May 16th at the Central Criminal Court before Baron Pollock and a common jury, Professor Hunter and Mr. J. M. Davidson appearing for the defence. The jury convicted, and the brave old man, sixty-eight years of age, was condemned to four months' imprisonment and £50 fine for selling a pamphlet which had been sold unchallenged, during a period of forty-five years, by James Watson, George Jacob Holyoake, Austin Holyoake, and Charles Watts. Mr. Grain, the counsel employed by the Vice Society, most unfairly used against Mr. Truelove my "Law of Population," a pamphlet which contained, Baron Pollock said, "the head and front of the offence in the other [the Knowlton] case." I find an indignant protest against this odious unfairness in the *National Reformer* for May 19th: "My 'Law of Population' was used against Mr. Truelove as an aggravation of his offence, passing over the utter meanness—worthy only of Collette—of using against a prisoner a book whose author has never been attacked for writing it—does Mr. Collette, or do the authorities, imagine that the severity shown to Mr. Truelove will in any fashion deter me from continuing the Malthusian propaganda? Let me here assure

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them, one and all, that it will do nothing of the kind. I shall continue to sell the 'Law of Population' and to advocate scientific checks to population just as though Mr Collette and his Vice Society were all dead and buried. In commonest justice they are bound to prosecute me, and if they get and keep, a verdict against me, and succeed in sending me to prison they will only make people more anxious to read my book and make me more personally powerful as a teacher of the views which they attack.

A persistent attempt was made to obtain a writ of error in Mr Truelove's case but the Tory Attorney-General Sir John Holker refused it although the ground on which it was asked was one of the grounds on which a similar writ had been granted to Mr Bradlaugh and myself. Mr Truelove was therefore compelled to suffer his sentence, but memorials, signed by 11,000 persons asking for his release, were sent to the Home Secretary from every part of the country, and a crowded meeting in St James's Hall, London demanded his liberation with only six dissentients. The whole agitation did not shorten Mr Truelove's sentence by a single day, and he was not released from Coldbath Fields Prison until September 5th. On the 12th of the same month the Hall of Science was crowded with enthusiastic friends, who assembled to do him honour, and he was presented with a beautifully-illuminated address and a purse containing £177 (subsequent subscriptions raised the amount to £197 16s 6d).

## ANNIE BESANT

It is scarcely necessary to say that one of the results of the prosecution was a great agitation throughout the country, and a wide popularisation of Malthusian views. Some huge demonstrations were held in favour of free discussion; on one occasion the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, was crowded to the doors; on another the Star Music Hall, Bradford, was crammed in every corner; on another the Town Hall, Birmingham, had not a seat or a bit of standing-room unoccupied. Wherever we went, separately or together, it was the same story, and not only were Malthusian lectures eagerly attended, and Malthusian literature eagerly bought, but curiosity brought many to listen to our Radical and Freethought lectures, and thousands heard for the first time what Secularism really meant.

The Press, both London and provincial, agreed in branding the prosecution as foolish, and it was generally remarked that it resulted only in the wider circulation of the indicted book, and the increased popularity of those who had stood for the right of publication. The furious attacks since made upon us have been made chiefly by those who differ from us in theological creed and who have found a misrepresentation of our prosecution served them as a convenient weapon of attack. During the last few years public opinion has been gradually coming round to our side, in consequence of the pressure of poverty resulting from widespread depression of trade, and during the sensation caused in 1884 by "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London," many writers in the *Daily News*—notably Mr. G. R. Sims—

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boldly alleged that the distress was to a great extent due to the large families of the poor and mentioned that we had been prosecuted for giving the very knowledge which would bring salvation to the sufferers in our great crises.

Among the useful results of the prosecution was the establishment of the Malthusian League—to agitate for the abolition of all penalties on the public discussion of the population question—and to spread among the people by all practicable means a knowledge of the law of population of its consequences and of its bearing upon human conduct and morals. The first general meeting of the League was held at the Hall of Science on July 26, 1877, and a council of twenty persons was elected, and this council on August 2nd elected Dr. C. P. Drysdale M.D. President, Mr. Swaagman Treasurer, Mrs. Besant Secretary, Mr. Shearer Assistant-Secretary, and Mr. Hember Financial Secretary. Since 1877 the League under the same indefatigable president has worked hard to carry out its objects: it has issued a large number of leaflets and tracts; it supports a monthly journal the *Malthusian*; numerous lectures have been delivered under its auspices in all parts of the country; and it has now a medical branch, into which none but duly qualified medical men and women are admitted, with members in all European countries.

Another result of the prosecution was the accession of Dr. D. to the staff of the *National Reformer*. This able and thoughtful writer came forward and joined our ranks as

soon as he heard of the attack on us, and he further volunteered to conduct the journal during our expected imprisonment. From that time to this—a period of fifteen years—articles from his pen appeared in its columns week by week, and during all that time not one solitary difficulty arose between editors and contributor. In public a trustworthy colleague, in private a warm and sincere friend, “D.” proved an unmixed benefit bestowed upon us by the prosecution.

Nor was “D.” the only friend brought to us by our foes. I cannot ever think of that time without remembering that the prosecution brought me first into close intimacy with Mrs. Annie Parris—the wife of Mr. Touzeau Parris, the Secretary of the Defence Committee throughout all the fight—a lady who, during that long struggle, and during the, for me, far worse struggle that succeeded it, over the custody of my daughter, proved to me the most loving and sisterly of friends. One or two other friendships which will, I hope, last my life, date from that same time of strife and anxiety.

The amount of money subscribed by the public during the Knowlton and succeeding prosecutions gives some idea of the interest felt in the struggle. The Defence Fund Committee in March, 1878, presented a balance-sheet, showing subscriptions amounting to £1,292 5s. 4d., and total expenditure in the Queen v. Bradlaugh and Besant, the Queen v. Truelove, and the appeal against Mr. Vaughan's order (the last two up to date) of £1,274

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10s This account was then closed and the balance of £17 15s 4d passed on to a new fund for the defence of Mr Truelove, the carrying on of the appeal against the destruction of the Knowlton pamphlet, and the bearing of the costs incident on the petition lodged against myself. In July this new fund had reached £196 16s 7d, and after paying the remainder of the costs in Mr Truelove's case a balance of £26 15s 2d was carried on. This again rose to £247 15s 2½d, and the fund bore the expenses of Mr Bradlaugh's successful appeal on the Knowlton pamphlet, the petition and subsequent proceedings in which I was concerned in the Court of Chancery, and an appeal on Mr Truelove's behalf, unfortunately unsuccessful, against an order for the destruction of the Dale Owen pamphlet. This last decision was given on February 21 1880, and on this the Defence Fund was closed. On Mr Truelove's release, as mentioned above, a testimonial to the amount of £197 16s 6d was presented to him, and after the close of the struggle some anonymous friend sent to me personally £200 as "thanks for the courage and ability shown." In addition to all this, the Malthusian League received no less than £455 11s 9d during the first year of its life, and started on its second year with a balance in hand of £77 5s 8d.

A somewhat similar prosecution in America, in which the bookseller, Mr D M Bennett, sold a book with which he did not agree, and was imprisoned, led to our giving him a warm welcome when, after his release, he visited



England. We entertained him at the Hall of Science at a crowded gathering, and I was deputed as spokesman to present him with a testimonial. This I did in the following speech, quoted here in order to show the spirit then animating me :

“ Friends, Mr. Bradlaugh has spoken of the duty that calls us here to-night. It is pleasant to think that in work that duty is one to which we are not unaccustomed. In our army there are more true soldiers than traitors more than are faithful to the trust of keeping the truth than those who shrink when the hour of danger comes. I would ask Mr. Bennett to-night not to measure his feeling towards him by the mere number of those present. They that are here are representatives of many thousands of our fellow-countrymen. Glance down this middle street and you will see that it is not without some right that we claim to welcome you in the name of multitudes of citizens of England. There are those who taunt us with want of loyalty, and with the name of infidels. In church will they find men and women more loyal to duty and conscience? The name infidel is not for us so long as we are faithful to the truth we know. If I speak, as I have done, of national representation in this hall this evening tell me, you who know those who sit here, who have watched some of them for years, others of them but a brief time, do I not speak truth? Take them one by one. Your President but a little while ago in circumstances not unlike those wherein our guest himself was placed, v

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true lover's keenness that recognises the mistress under all disguise, beholding his mistress Liberty in danger, under circumstances that would have blinded less sure eyes leapt to her rescue. He risked the ambition of his life rather than be disloyal to liberty. And next is seated a woman, who, student of a noble profession thought that liberty had greater claim upon her than even her work. When we stood in worse peril than even loss of liberty, she risked her own good name for the truth's sake. One also is here who, eminent in his own profession came with the weight of his position and his right to speak, and gave a kindred testimony. One step further and you see one who soldier to liberty, throughout a long and spotless life, when the task was far harder than it is to-day when there were no greetings, no welcomes when to serve was to peril name as well as liberty, never flinched from the first until now. He is crowned with the glory of the jail, that was his for no crime but for claiming the right to publish that wherein the noblest thought is uttered in the bravest words. And next him is another who speaks for liberty, who has brought culture, university degree position in men's sight, and many friends, and cast them all at her beloved feet. Sir, not alone the past and the present greet you to-night. The future also greets you with us. We have here also those who are training themselves to walk in the footsteps of the one most dear to them, who shall carry on, when we have passed away, the work which we shall have dropped from our hands. But he whom we delight to

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honour at this hour in truth honours us, in that he allows us to offer him the welcome that it is our glory and our pleasure to give. He has fought bravely. The Christian creed had in its beginning more traitors and less true hearts than the creed of to-day. We are happy to-day not only in the thought of what manner of men we have for leaders, but in the thought of what manner of men we have as soldiers in our army. Jesus had twelve apostles. One betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver; a second denied Him. They all forsook Him and fled. We can scarcely point to one who has thus deserted our sacred cause. The traditions of our party tell us of many who went to jail because they claimed for all the right of free speech which is the heritage of all. One of the most famous members of our body in England, Richard Carlile, turned bookseller to sell books that were prosecuted. This man became Freethinker, driven thereto by the bigotry and wickedness of the Churches. He sold the books of Hone not because he agreed with them, but because Hone was prosecuted. He saw that the book in whose prosecution freedom was attacked was the book for the freeman to sell; and the story of our guest shows that in all this England and America are one. Those who gave Milton to the world can yet bring forth men of the same stamp in continents leagues asunder. Because our friend was loyal and true, prison had to him no dread. It was far, far less of dishonour to wear the garb of the convict than to wear that of the hypocrite. The society we represent, like his

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society in America, pleads for free thought, speaks for free speech, claims for every one, however antagonistic, the right to speak the thought he feels. It is better that this should be, even though the thought be wrong, for thus the sooner will its error be discovered—better if the thought be right, for then the sooner does the gladness of a new truth find place in the heart of man. As the mouth-piece, Sir, of our National Secular Society, and of its thousands of members, I speak to you now

• • ADDRESS

“ • *We seek for Truth*

“ • To D M BENNETT

“ • In asking you to accept at the hands of the National Secular Society of England this symbol of cordial sympathy and brotherly welcome, we are but putting into act the motto of our Society. ‘We seek for Truth’ is our badge, and it is as Truthseeker that we do you homage to-night. Without free speech no search for Truth is possible, without free speech no discovery of Truth is useful, without free speech progress is checked, and the nations no longer march forward towards the nobler life which the future holds for man. Better a thousandfold abuse of free speech than denial of free speech. The abuse dies in a day, the denial slays the life of the people and entombs the hope of the race.

“ • In your own country you have pleaded for free speech, and when, under a wicked and an odious law, one of

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your fellow-citizens was imprisoned for the publication of his opinions, you, not sharing the opinions but faithful to liberty, sprang forward to defend in him the principle of free speech which you claimed for yourself, and sold his book while he lay in prison. For this act you were in turn arrested and sent to jail, and the country which won its freedom by the aid of Paine in the eighteenth century disgraced itself in the nineteenth by the imprisonment of a heretic. The Republic of the United States dishonoured herself, and not you, in Albany penitentiary. Two hundred thousand of your countrymen pleaded for your release, but bigotry was too strong. We sent you greeting in your captivity ; we rejoiced when the time came for your release. We offer you to-night our thanks and our hope—thanks for the heroism which never flinched in the hour of battle, hope for a more peaceful future, in which the memory of a past pain may be a sacred heritage and not a regret.

“ ‘ CHARLES BRADLAUGH, *President.*’

“ Soldier of liberty, we give you this. Do in the future the same good service that you have done in the past, and your reward shall be in the love that true men shall bear to you.”

That, however, which no force could compel me to do, which I refused to threats of fine and prison, to separation from my children, to social ostracism, and to insults and ignominy worse to bear than death, I surrendered freely when all the struggle was over, and a great part of society and of public opinion had adopted the view that

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cost Mr Bradlaugh and myself so dear I may as well complete the story here, so as not to have to refer to it again I gave up Neo-Malthusianism in April, 1891, its renunciation being part of the outcome of two years' instruction from Mdme H P Blavatsky who showed me that however justifiable Neo-Malthusianism might be while man was regarded only as the most perfect outcome of physical evolution, it was wholly incompatible with the view of man as a spiritual being, whose material form and environment were the results of his own mental activity Why and how I embraced Theosophy, and accepted H P Blavatsky as teacher, will soon be told in its proper place Here I am concerned only with the why and how of my renunciation of the Neo-Malthusian teaching for which I had fought so hard and suffered so much

When I built my life on the basis of Materialism I judged all actions by their effect on human happiness in this world now and in future generations regarding man as an organism that lived on earth and there perished, with activities confined to earth and limited by physical laws The object of life was the ultimate building-up of a physically, mentally, morally perfect man by the cumulative effects of heredity—mental and moral tendencies being regarded as the outcome of material conditions to be slowly but surely evolved by rational selection and the transmission to offspring of qualities carefully acquired by, and developed in, parents The most characteristic note of this serious and lofty Materialism had been struck by

Professor W. K. Clifford in his noble article on the "Ethics of Belief."

Taking this view of human duty in regard to the rational co-operation with nature in the evolution of the human race, it became of the first importance to rescue the control of the generation of offspring from mere blind brute passion, and to transfer it to the reason and to the intelligence ; to impress on parents the sacredness of the parental office, the tremendous responsibility of the exercise of the creative function. And since, further, one of the most pressing problems for solution in the older countries is that of poverty. the horrible slums and dens into which are crowded and in which are festering families of eight and ten children, whose parents are earning an uncertain 10s., 12s., 15s., and 20s. a week ; since an immediate palliative is wanted, if popular risings impelled by starvation are to be avoided ; since the lives of men and women of the poorer classes, and of the worst paid professional classes, are one long, heart-breaking struggle " to make both ends meet and keep respectable " ; since in the middle class marriage is often avoided, or delayed till late in life, from the dread of the large family, and late marriage is followed by its shadow, the prevalence of vice and the moral and social ruin of thousands of women ; for these, and many other reasons, the teaching of the duty of limiting the family within the means of subsistence is the logical outcome of Materialism linked with the scientific view of evolution, and with a knowledge of the physical

law, by which evolution is accelerated or retarded. Seeking to improve the physical type, scientific Materialism, it seemed to me, must forbid parentage to any but healthy married couples ; it must restrict childbearing within the limits consistent with the thorough health and physical well-being of the mother . it must impose it as a duty never to bring children into the world unless the conditions for their fair nurture and development are present . Regarding it as hopeless, as well as mischievous, to preach asceticism, and looking on the conjunction of nominal celibacy with widespread prostitution as inevitable, from the constitution of human nature, scientific Materialism—quite rationally and logically—advises deliberate restriction of the production of offspring, while sanctioning the exercise of the sexual instinct within the limits imposed by temperance, the highest physical and mental efficiency, the good order and dignity of society, and the self-respect of the individual.

In all this there is nothing which for one moment implies approval of licentiousness, profligacy, unbridled self-indulgence . On the contrary, it is a well-considered and intellectually-defensible scheme of human evolution, regarding all natural instincts as matters for regulation, not for destruction, and seeking to develop the perfectly healthy and well-balanced physical body as the necessary basis for the healthy and well-balanced mind . If the premises of Materialism be true, there is no answer to the Neo-Malthusian conclusions ; for even those Socialists who have bitterly opposed the promulgation of Neo-Malthusianism



—regarding it as a “red herring intended to draw the attention of the proletariat away from the real cause of poverty, the monopoly of land and capital by a class”—admit that when society is built on the foundation of common property in all that is necessary for the production of wealth, the time will come for the consideration of the population question. Nor do I now see, any more than I saw then, how any Materialist can rationally avoid the Neo-Malthusian position. For if man be the outcome of purely physical causes, it is with these that we must deal in guiding his future evolution. If he be related but to terrestrial existence, he is but the loftiest organism of earth ; and, failing to see his past and his future, how should my eyes not have been then blinded to the deep-lying causes of his present woe ? I brought a material cure to a disease which appeared to me to be of material origin ; but how when the evil came from a subtler source, and its causes lay not on the material plane ? How if the remedy only set up new causes for a future evil, and, while immediately a palliative, strengthened the disease itself, and ensured its reappearance in the future ? This was the view of the problem set before me by H. P. Blavatsky when she unrolled the story of man, told of his origin and his destiny, showed me the forces, that went to the making of man, and the true relation between his past, his present, and his future.

For what is man in the light of Theosophy ? He is a spiritual intelligence, eternal and uncreate, treading a vast

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cycle of human experience, born and reborn on earth millennium after millennium, evolving slowly into the ideal man. He is not the product of matter, but is encased in matter, and the forms of matter with which he clothes himself are of his own making. For the intelligence and will of man are creative forces—not creative *ex nihilo*, but creative as is the brain of the painter—and these forces are exercised by man in every act of thought. Thus he is ever creating round him thought-forms moulding subtlest matter into shape by these energies forms which persist as tangible realities when the body of the thinker has long gone back to earth and air and water. When the time for rebirth into this earth-life comes for the soul these thought-forms, its own progeny, help to form the tenuous model into which the molecules of physical matter are builded for the making of the body, and matter is thus moulded for the new body in which the soul is to dwell, on the lines laid down by the intelligent and volitional life of the previous, or of many previous incarnations. So does each man create for himself in verity the form wherein he functions, and what he is in his present is the inevitable outcome of his own creative energies in his past. Applying this to the Neo-Malthusian theory, we see in sexual love not only a passion which man has in common with the brute, and which forms at the present stage of evolution, a necessary part of human nature, but an animal passion that may be trained and purified into a human emotion, which may be used as one of the levers in human progress, one of the

factors in human growth. But, instead of this, man in the past has made his intellect the servant of his passions ; the abnormal development of the sexual instinct in man—in whom it is far greater and more continuous than in any brute—is due to the mingling with it of the intellectual element, all sexual thoughts, desires, and imaginations having created thought-forms, which have been wrought into the human race, giving rise to a continual demand, far beyond nature, and in marked contrast with the temperance of normal animal life. Hence it has become one of the most fruitful sources of human misery and human degradation, and the satisfaction of its imperious cravings in civilised countries lies at the root of our worst social evils. This excessive development has to be fought against, and the instinct reduced within natural limits, and this will certainly never be done by easy-going self-indulgence within the marital relation any more than by self-indulgence outside it. By none other road than that of self-control and self-denial can men and women now set going the causes which will build for them brains and bodies of a higher type for their future return to earth-life. They have to hold this instinct in complete control, to transmute it from passion into tender and self-denying affection, to develop the intellectual at the expense of the animal, and thus to raise the whole man to the human stage, in which every intellectual and physical capacity shall subserve the purposes of the soul. From all this it follows that Theosophists should sound the note of self-restraint

within marriage, and the gradual—for with the mass it cannot be sudden—restriction of the sexual relation to the perpetuation of the race

Such was the bearing of Theosophical teaching on Neo-Malthusianism, as laid before me by H P Blavatsky, and when I urged, out of my bitter knowledge of the miseries endured by the poor that it surely might, for a time at least, be recommended as a palliative, as a defence in the hands of a woman against intolerable oppression and enforced suffering, she bade me look beyond the moment, and see how the suffering must come back and back with every generation, unless we sought to remove the roots of wrong “I do not judge a woman,” she said, “who has resort to such means of defence in the midst of circumstances so evil, and whose ignorance of the real causes of all this misery is her excuse for snatching at any relief But it is not for you, an Occultist, to continue to teach a method which you now know must tend to the perpetuation of the sorrow I felt that she was right, and though I shrank from the decision—for my heart somewhat failed me at withdrawing from the knowledge of the poor, so far as I could, a temporary palliative of evils which too often wreck their lives and bring many to an early grave, worn old before even middle age has touched them—yet the decision was made I refused to reprint the ‘Law of Population’ or to sell the copyright, giving pain, as I sadly knew, to all the brave and loyal friends who had so generously stood by me in that long and bitter struggle, and who saw the

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results of victory thrown away on grounds to them inadequate and mistaken. Will it always be, I wonder, in man's climbing upward, that every step must be set on his own heart and on the hearts of those he loves?





ANNIE BESANT IN 1878

## CHAPTER X

### AT WAR ALL ROUND

COMING back to my work after my long and dangerous illness, I took up again its thread, heartsick, but with courage unshaken, and I find myself in the *National Reformer* for September 15, 1878, saying in a brief note of thanks that "neither the illness nor the trouble which produced it has in any fashion lessened my determination to work for the cause." In truth, I plunged into work with added vigour, for only in that did I find any solace, but the pamphlets written at this time against Christianity were marked with considerable bitterness, for it was Christianity that had robbed me of my child, and I struck mercilessly at it in return. In the political struggles of that time, when the Beaconsfield Government was in full swing, with its policy of annexation and aggression, I played my part with tongue and pen, and my articles in defence of an honest and liberty-loving policy in India, against the invasion of Afghanistan and other outrages, laid in many an Indian heart a foundation of affection for me, and seem to me now as a preparation for the work among Indians to which much of my time and thought to-day are given. In November of



this same year (1878) I wrote a little book on "England, India, and Afghanistan" that has brought me many a warm letter of thanks, and with this, the carrying on of the suit against Mr. Besant before alluded to, two and often three lectures every Sunday, to say nothing of the editorial work on the *National Reformer*, the secretarial work on the Malthusian League, and stray lectures during the week, my time was fairly well filled. But I found that in my reading I developed a tendency to let my thoughts wander from the subject in hand, and that they would drift after my lost little one, so I resolved to fill up the gaps in my scientific education, and to amuse myself by reading up for some examinations; I thought it would serve as an absorbing form of recreation from my other work, and would at the same time, by making my knowledge exact, render me more useful as a speaker on behalf of the causes to which my life was given.

At the opening of the new year (1879) I met for the first time a man to whom I subsequently owed much in this department of work—Edward B. Aveling, a D.Sc. of London University, and a marvellously able teacher of scientific subjects, the very ablest, in fact, that I have ever met. Clear and accurate in his knowledge, with a singular gift for lucid exposition, enthusiastic in his love of science, and taking vivid pleasure in imparting his knowledge to others, he was an ideal teacher. This young man, in January, 1879, began writing under initials for the *National Reformer*, and in February I became his pupil, with the

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view of matriculating in June at the London University, an object which was duly accomplished. And here let me say to any one in mental trouble that they might find an immense relief in taking up some intellectual recreation of this kind, during that spring in addition to my ordinary work of writing, lecturing and editing—and the lecturing meant travelling from one end of England to the other—I translated a fair-sized French volume and had the wear-and-tear of pleading my case for the custody of my daughter in the Court of Appeal, as well as the case before the Master of the Rolls and I found it the very greatest relief to turn to algebra, geometry and physics and forget the harassing legal struggles in wrestling with formulæ and problems. The full access I gained to my children marked a step in the long battle of Freethinkers against disabilities for, as noted in the *National Reformer* by Mr Bradlaugh it was “won with a pleading unequalled in any case on record for the boldness of its affirmation of Freethought a pleading of which he generously said that it deserved well of the party as “the most powerful pleading for freedom of opinion to which it has ever been our good fortune to listen.”

In the *London Daily News* some powerful letters of protest appeared, one from Lord Harborton in which he declared that “the Inquisition acted on no other principle than that applied to me, and a second from Mr Band, in which he sarcastically observed that ‘this Christian community has for some time had the pleasure of seeing her

Majesty's courts repeatedly springing engines of torture upon a young mother—a clergyman's wife who dared to disagree with his creed—and her evident anguish, her long and expensive struggles to save her child, have proved that so far as heretical mothers are concerned modern defenders of the faith need not envy the past those persuasive instruments which so long secured the unity of the Church. In making Mrs. Besant an example, the Master of the Rolls and Lord Justice James have been careful not to allow any of the effect to be lost by confusion of the main point—the intellectual heresy—with side questions. There was a Malthusian matter in the case, but the judges were very clear in stating that without any reference whatever to that, they would simply, on the ground of Mrs. Besant's 'religious, or anti-religious, opinions,' take her child from her." The great provincial papers took a similar tone, the *Manchester Examiner* going so far as to say of the ruling of the judges: "We do not say they have done so wrongly. We only say that the effect of their judgment is cruel, and it shows that the holding of unpopular opinions is, in the eye of the law, an offence which, despite all we had thought to the contrary, may be visited with the severest punishment a woman and a mother can be possibly called on to bear." The outcome of all this long struggle and of another case of sore injustice—in which Mrs. Agar-Ellis, a Roman Catholic, was separated from her children by a judicial decision obtained against her by her husband, a Protestant—was a change in

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the law which had vested all power over the children in the hands of the father, and from thenceforth the rights of the married mother were recognised to a limited extent. A small side-fight was with the National Sunday League, the president of which, Lord Thurlow, strongly objected to me as one of the vice-presidents. Mr P A Taylor and others at once resigned their offices, and on the calling of a general meeting, Lord Thurlow was rejected as president. Mr P A Taylor was requested to assume the presidency, and the vice-presidents who had resigned were with myself, re-elected. Little battles of this sort were a running accompaniment of graver struggles during all these battling years.

And through all the struggles the organised strength of the Freethought party grew. 650 new members being enrolled in the National Secular Society in the year 1878-79, and in July, 1879, the public adhesion of Dr Edward B Aveling brought into the ranks a pen of rare force and power, and gave a strong impulse to the educational side of our movement. I presided for him at his first lecture at the Hall of Science on August 10 1879, and he soon paid the penalty of his boldness, finding himself, a few months later, dismissed from the Chair of Comparative Anatomy at the London Hospital, though the Board admitted that all his duties were discharged with punctuality and ability. One of the first results of his adhesion was the establishment of two classes under the Science and Art Department at South Kensington, and

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these grew year after year, attended by numbers of men and women, till in 1883 we had thirteen classes: swing, as well as Latin, and London University Matric classes; all these were taught by Dr. Aveling and that he had trained. I took advanced certificates, honours, and so became qualified as a science teacher in eight different sciences, and Alice and Hypatia Bradlaugh followed a similar course, so that winter after winter kept these classes going from September to the following May, from 1879 until the year 1888. In addition to Miss Bradlaugh carried on a choral union.

Personally I found that this study and teaching together with attendance at classes held for teachers at Kensington, the study for passing the First B.Sc. and Sc. Examinations at London University, and the study for the B.Sc. degree at London, at which I failed in physics and chemistry three times—a thing that puzzled me not at the time, as I had passed a far more difficult practical chemical examination for teachers at South Kensington—this gave me a knowledge of science that has stood good stead in my public work. But even here theological and social hatred pursued me.

When Miss Bradlaugh and myself applied for permission to attend the botany class at University College were refused, I for my sins, and she only for being father's daughter; when I had qualified as teacher I stood back from claiming recognition from the Department for a year in order not to prejudice the claim

Mr Bradlaugh's daughters and later when I had been recognised Sir Henry Tyler in the House of Commons attacked the Education Department for accepting me and actually tried to prevent the Government grant being paid to the Hall of Science Schools because Dr Aveling the Misses Bradlaugh and myself were unbelievers in Christianity When I asked permission to go to the Botanical Gardens in Regent's Park the curator refused it on the ground that his daughters studied there On every side repulse and insult hard to struggle against bitter to bear It was against difficulties of this kind on every side that we had to make our way handicapped in every effort by our heresy Let our work be as good as it might and our Science School was exceptionally successful the subtle fragrance of heresy was everywhere distinguishable and when Mr Bradlaugh and myself are blamed for bitterness in our anti-Christian advocacy this constant gnawing annoyance and petty persecution should be taken into account For him it was especially trying for he saw his daughters—girls of ability and of high character whose only crime was that they were his—insulted sneered at slandered continually put at a disadvantage because they were his children and loved and honoured him beyond all others

It was in October 1879 that I first met Herbert Burrows though I did not become intimately acquainted with him till the Socialist troubles of the autumn of 1887 drew us into a common stream of work He came as a

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delegate from the Tower Hamlets Radical Association to a preliminary conference, called by Mr. Bradlaugh, at the Hall of Science, on October 11th, to consider the advisability of holding a great London Convention on Land Law Reform, to be attended by delegates from all parts of the kingdom. He was appointed on the Executive Committee with Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Mottershead, Mr. Nieass, and others. The Convention was successfully held, and an advanced platform of Land Law Reform adopted, used later by Mr. Bradlaugh as a basis for some of the proposals he laid before Parliament.

## CHAPTER XI

### MR BRADLAUGH'S STRUGGLE

AND now dawned the year 1880 the memorable year in which commenced Mr Bradlaugh's long Parliamentary battle. After a long and bitter struggle he was elected with Mr Labouchere as member for Northampton at the general election and so the prize so long fought for was won. Shall I ever forget that election day April 2 1880? How at four o'clock Mr Bradlaugh came into the room at the "George" where his daughters and I were sitting flung himself into a chair with "There's nothing more to do our last man is polled." Then the waiting for the declaration through the long weary hours of suspense till as the time drew near we knelt by the window listening—listening to the hoarse murmur of the crowd knowing that presently there would be a roar of triumph or a howl of anger when the numbers were read out from the steps of the Town Hall. And now silence sank and we knew the moment had come, and we held our breath and then—a roar, a wild roar of joy and exultation cheer after cheer, ringing throbbing pealing and then the mighty surge of



the crowd bringing him back, their member at last, waving hats, handkerchiefs, a very madness of tumultuous delight, and the shrill strains of "Bradlaugh for Northampton!" with a ring of triumph in them they had never had before. And he, very grave, somewhat shaken by the outpour of love and exultation, very silent, feeling the weight of new responsibility more than the gladness of victory. And then the next morning, as he left the town, the mass of men and women, one sea of heads from hotel to station, every window crowded, his colours waving everywhere, men fighting to get near him, to touch him, women sobbing, the cries, "Our Charlie, our Charlie; we've got you and we'll keep you." How they loved him, how they joyed in the triumph won after twelve years of strife. Ah me! we thought the struggle over, and it was only beginning; we thought our hero victorious, and a fiercer, crueller fight lay in front. True, he was to win that fight, but his life was to be the price of the winning; victory for him was to be final, complete, but the laurel-wreath was to fall upon a grave.

The outburst of anger from the more bigoted of the Christian community was as savage as the outburst of delight had been exultant, but we recked little of it. Was he not member, duly elected, without possibility of assailment in his legal right? Parliament was to meet on April 29th, the swearing-in beginning on the following day, and Mr. Bradlaugh had taken counsel with some other Freethinking members as to the right

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of Freethinkers to affirm. He held that under the Act 29 and 30 Vict c 19, and the Evidence Amendment Acts 1869 and 1870, the right to substitute affirmation for oath was clear, he was willing to take the oath as a necessary form if obligatory, but believing it to be optional, he preferred affirmation. On May 3rd he presented himself and, according to the evidence of Sir Erskine May, the Clerk of the House given before the second Select Committee on his case he 'came to the table and delivered the following statement in writing to the Clerk: 'To the Right Honourable the Speaker of the House of Commons I, the undersigned Charles Bradlaugh, beg respectfully to claim to be allowed to affirm, as a person for the time being by law permitted to make a solemn affirmation or declaration instead of taking an oath (Signed) Charles Bradlaugh. And being asked by the Clerk upon what grounds he claimed to make an affirmation, he answered 'By virtue of the Evidence Amendment Acts 1869 and 1870. Whereupon the Clerk reported to Mr Speaker the claim and Mr Speaker told Mr Bradlaugh that he might address the House on the matter. "Mr Bradlaugh's observations were very short. He repeated that he relied upon the Evidence Further Amendment Act, 1869, and the Evidence Amendment Act 1870, adding 'I have repeatedly, for nine years past, made an affirmation in the highest courts of jurisdiction in this realm. I am ready to make such a declaration or affirmation. Substantially those were the words which he addressed to

the Speaker." This was the simple, quiet, and dignified scene which took place in the House. Mr. Bradlaugh was directed to withdraw, and he withdrew, and, after debate, a Select Committee was appointed to consider whether he could make affirmation; that Committee decided against the claim, and gave in its report on May 20th. On the following day Mr. Bradlaugh presented himself at the table of the House to take the oath in the form prescribed by the law, and on the objection of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, who submitted a motion that he should not be allowed to take the oath, another Committee was appointed.

Before this Committee Mr. Bradlaugh stated his case, and pointed out that the legal obligation lay on him to take the oath, adding: "Any form that I went through, any oath that I took, I should regard as binding upon my conscience in the fullest degree. I would go through no form, I would take no oath, unless I meant it to be so binding." He wrote in the same sense to the *Times*, saying that he should regard himself "as bound, not by the letter of its words, but by the spirit which the affirmation would have conveyed, had I been permitted to use it." The Committee reported against him, and on June 23rd he was heard at the Bar of the House, and made a speech so self-restrained, so noble, so dignified, that the House, in defiance of all its own rules, broke out over and over again into applause. In the debate that preceded his speech, members had lost sight of the ordinary rules of decency, and had used expressions against myself wholly

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gratuitous in such a quarrel, the grave rebuke to him who "was wanting in chivalry, because, while I can answer for myself and am able to answer for myself, nothing justified the introduction of any other name beside my own to make prejudice against me," brought irrepressible cheers. His appeal was wholly to the law. "I have not yet used—I trust no passion may tempt me into using—any words that would seem to savour of even a desire to enter into conflict with this House. I have always taught, preached, and believed the supremacy of Parliament, and it is not because for a moment the judgment of one Chamber of Parliament should be hostile to me that I am going to deny the ideas I have always held; but I submit that one Chamber of Parliament—even its grandest Chamber, as I have always held this to be—had no right to override the law. The law gives me the right to sign that roll, to take and subscribe the oath, and to take my seat there [with a gesture towards the benches]. I admit that the moment I am in the House, without any reason but your own good will, you can send me away. That is your right. You have full control over your members. But you cannot send me away until I have been heard in my place, not a suppliant as I am now, but with the rightful audience that each member has always had . . . I am ready to admit, if you please, for the sake of argument, that every opinion I hold is wrong and deserves punishment. Let the law punish it. If you say the law cannot, then you admit that you have no right, and I appeal to public opinion against the iniquity of a

decision which overrides the law and denies me justice. I beg your pardon, sir, and that of the House too, if in this warmth there seems to lack respect for its dignity. And as I shall have, if your decision be against me, to come to that table when your decision is given, I beg you, before the step is taken in which we may both lose our dignity—mine is not much, but yours is that of the Commons of England—I beg you, before the gauntlet is fatally thrown, I beg you, not in any sort of menace, not in any sort of boast, but as one man against six hundred, to give me that justice which on the other side of this hall the judges would give me, were I pleading there before them."

But no eloquence, no plea for justice, could stay the tide of Tory and religious bigotry, and the House voted that he should not be allowed to take the oath. Summoned to the table to hear the decision communicated by the Speaker, he answered that decision with the words firmly spoken: "I respectfully refuse to obey the order of the House, because that order was against the law." The Speaker appealed to the House for direction, and on a division—during which the Speaker and Charles Bradlaugh were left together in the chamber—the House ordered the enforcement of Mr. Bradlaugh's withdrawal. Once more the order is given, once more the refusal made, and then the Serjeant-at-Arms was bidden to remove him. Strange was the scene as little Captain Gosset walked up to the member of Herculean proportions, and men wondered how the order would be enforced; but

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Charles Bradlaugh was not the man to make a vulgar brawl, and the light touch on his shoulder was to him the touch of an authority he admitted and to which he bowed. So he gravely accompanied his small captor and was lodged in the Clock Tower of the House as prisoner until the House should further consider what to do with him—the most awkward prisoner it had ever had, in that in his person it was imprisoning the law

In a special issue of the *National Reformer*, giving an account of the Committee's work and of Mr Bradlaugh's committal to the Clock Tower, I find the following from my own pen "The Tory party, beaten at the polls by the nation, has thus, for the moment, triumphed in the House of Commons. The man chosen by the Radicals of Northampton has been committed to prison on the motion of the Tory ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, simply because he desires to discharge the duty laid upon him by his constituency and by the law of the land As this paper goes to press, I go to Westminster to receive from him his directions as to the conduct of the struggle with the nation into which the House of Commons has so recklessly plunged." I found him busily writing, prepared for all events, ready for a long imprisonment. On the following day a leaflet from my pen, "Law Makers and Law Breakers," appealed to the people, after reciting what had happened, it concluded. "Let the people speak. Gladstone and Bright are for Liberty, and the help denied them within the House must come to them from without. No

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time must be lost. While we remain idle, a representative of the people is illegally held in prison. Northampton is insulted, and in this great constituency every constituency is threatened. On freedom of election depends our liberty, on freedom of conscience depends our progress. The squire and lordlings have defied the people and measured their strength against the masses. Let the masses speak. But there was no need to make appeals, for the outrage itself caused so swiftly a growl of anger that on the next day the prisoner was set free, and there came upon protest against the high-handed action of the House. In Westminster Hall 4,000 people gathered to cheer Mr. Bradlaugh when he came to the House on the day after his liberation. In less than a week 200 meetings thundered out their protest. Liberal associations, clubs and societies, sent up messages of anger and of demand for justice. In Trafalgar Square there gathered—so said the papers—the largest crowd ever seen there, and on Thursday following—the meeting was held on Monday—the House of Commons rescinded its resolution, refusing to allow Mr. Bradlaugh to affirm, and admitted him on Friday July 2nd, to take his seat after affirmation. “At last the bitter struggle is over,” I wrote, “and law and right have triumphed. The House of Commons has, by rescinding its resolution passed by Tories and Ultramontanes, re-established its good name in the eyes of the world. The triumph is not one of Freethought over Christianity, nor is it the triumph of the House of Commons; it is the triumph of law, brought

about by good men—of all shades of opinion but of one faith in justice—over Tory contempt of law and Ultramontane bigotry. It is the reassertion of civil and religious liberty under the most difficult circumstances the declaration that the House of Commons is the creation of the people and not a club of the aristocracy with the right of blackballing in its own hands.

The battle between Charles Bradlaugh and his persecutors was now transferred to the law courts. As soon as he had taken his seat he was served with a writ for having voted without having taken the oath and this began the wearisome proceedings by which his defeated enemies boasted that they would make him bankrupt and so vacate the seat he had so hardly gained. Rich men like Mr Newdegate sued him putting forward a man of straw as nominal plaintiff for many a weary month Mr Bradlaugh kept all his enemies at bay fighting each case himself defeated time after time he fought on finally carrying the cases to the House of Lords and there winning them triumphantly. But they were won at such heavy cost of physical strength and of money that they undermined his strength and burdened him heavily with debt. For all this time he had not only to fight in the law courts and to attend scrupulously to his Parliamentary duties but he had to earn his living by lecturing and writing so that his nights away from the House were spent in travelling and his days in incessant labour. Many of his defeated foes turned their weapons against me hoping thus to give him pain thus



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Admiral Sir John Hay, at Wigton, used language of me so coarse that the *Scotsman* and *Glasgow Herald* refused to print it, and the editor of the *Scotsman* described it as "language so coarse that it could have hardly dropped from a yahoo."

August 25th found me at Brussels, whither I went, with Miss Hypatia Bradlaugh, to represent the English Freethinkers at the International Freethought Conference. It was an interesting gathering, attended by men of world-wide reputation, including Dr. Ludwig Büchner, a man of noble and kindly nature. An International Federation of Freethinkers was there founded, which did something towards bringing together the Freethinkers of different countries, and held interesting congresses in the following years in London and Amsterdam ; but beyond these meetings it did little, and lacked energy and vitality. In truth, the Freethought party in each country had so much to do in holding its own that little time and thought could be given to international organisations. For myself, my introduction to Dr. Büchner, led to much interesting correspondence, and I translated, with his approval, his "Mind in Animals," and the enlarged fourteenth edition of "Force and Matter," as well as one or two pamphlets. This autumn of 1880 found the so-called Liberal Government in full tilt against the Irish leaders, and I worked hard to raise English feeling in defence of Irish freedom even against attack by one so much honoured as was Mr. Gladstone. It was uphill work, for harsh language had been used





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against England and all things English, but I showed by definite figures—all up and down England—that life and property were far safer in Ireland than in England, that Ireland was singularly free from crime save in agrarian disputes, and I argued that these would disappear if the law should step in between landlord and tenant and by stopping the crimes of rack-renting and most brutal eviction, put an end to the horrible retaliations that were born of despair and revenge. A striking point on these evictions I quoted from Mr T P O'Connor, who, using Mr Gladstone's words that a sentence of eviction was a sentence of starvation told of 15,000 processes of eviction issued in that one year. The autumn's work was varied by the teaching of science classes a debate with a clergyman of the Church of England, and an operation which kept me in bed for three weeks, but which on the other hand, was useful, for I learned to write while lying on my back and accomplished in this fashion a good part of the translation of "*Mind in Animals*".

And here let me point a moral about hard work. Hard work kills no one. I find a note in the *National Reformer* in 1880 from the pen of Mr Bradlaugh. "It is, we fear, useless to add that, in the judgment of her best friends, Mrs Besant has worked far too hard during the last two years." This is 1893, and the thirteen years' interval has been full of incessant work, and I am working harder than ever now, and in splendid health. Looking over the *National Reformer* for all these years, it seems to me that

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it did really fine educational work ; Mr. Bradlaugh's strenuous utterances on political and theological matters ; Dr. Ave-ling's luminous and beautiful scientific teachings ; and to my share fell much of the educative work on questions of political and national morality in our dealings with weaker nations. We put all our hearts into our work, and the influence exercised was distinctly in favour of pure living and high thinking.

In the spring of 1881 the Court of Appeal decided against Mr. Bradlaugh's right to affirm as Member of Parliament, and his seat was declared vacant, but he was at once returned again by the borough of Northampton, despite the virulence of slander directed against him, so that he rightly described the election as "the most bitter I have ever fought." His work in the House had won him golden opinions in the country, and he was already recognised as a power there ; so Tory fear was added to bigoted hatred, and the efforts to keep him out of the House were increased.

He was introduced to the House as a new member to take his seat by Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Burt, but Sir Stafford Northcote intervened, and after a lengthy debate, which included a speech from Mr. Bradlaugh at the Bar, a majority of thirty-three refused to allow him to take the oath. After a prolonged scene, during which Mr. Bradlaugh declined to withdraw and the House hesitated to use force, the House adjourned, and finally the Government promised to bring in an Affirmation Bill, and Mr. Bradlaugh promised,

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with the consent of his constituents, to await the decision of the House on this Bill. Meantime, a League for the Defence of Constitutional Rights was formed, and the agitation in the country grew wherever Mr Bradlaugh went to speak vast crowds awaited him, and he travelled from one end of the country to the other, the people answering his appeal for justice with no uncertain voice. On July 2nd, in consequence of Tory obstruction, Mr Gladstone wrote to Mr Bradlaugh that the Government were going to drop the Affirmation Bill, and Mr Bradlaugh thereupon determined to present himself once more in the House, and fixed on August 3rd as the date of such action so that the Irish Land Bill might get through the House ere any delay in business was caused by him. The House was then closely guarded with police the great gates were closed, reserves of police were packed in the law courts and all through July this state of siege continued. On August 2nd there was a large meeting in Trafalgar Square, at which delegates were present from all parts of England, and from as far north as Edinburgh, and on Wednesday, August 3rd, Mr Bradlaugh went down to the House. His last words to me were "The people know you better than they know any one, save myself, whatever happens, mind, whatever happens, let them do no violence, I trust to you to keep them quiet." He went to the House entrance with Dr Aveling, and into the House alone. His daughters and I went together, and with some hundreds of others carrying petitions—ten only with each petition, and the ten rigidly

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counted and allowed to pass through the gate, sufficiently opened to let one through at a time—reached Westminster Hall, where we waited on the steps leading to the passage of the lobby.

An inspector ordered us off. I gently intimated that we were within our rights. Dramatic order: "Four officers this way." Up they marched and looked at us, and we looked at them. "I think you had better consult Inspector Denning before you use violence," I remarked placidly. They thought they had, and in a few moments up came the inspector, and seeing that we were standing in a place where we had a right to be, and were doing no harm, he rebuked his over-zealous subordinates, and they retired and left us in peace. A man of much tact and discretion was Inspector Denning. Indeed, all through this, the House of Commons police behaved admirably well. Even in the attack they were ordered to make on Mr. Bradlaugh, the police used as little violence as they could. It was Mr. Erskine, the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms, and his ushers, who showed the brutality; as Dr. Aveling wrote at the time: "The police disliked their work, and, as brave men, had a sympathy for a brave man. Their orders they obeyed rigidly. This done, they were kindness itself." Gradually the crowd of petitioners grew and grew; angry murmurs were heard, for no news came from the House, and they loved "Charlie," and were mostly north country men, sturdy and independent. They thought they had a right to go into the lobby, and suddenly, with the impulse that will



sway a crowd to a single action there was a roar, "Petition, petition, justice, justice, and they surged up the steps, charging at the policemen who held the door. Flashed into my mind my chief's charge, his words, 'I trust to you to keep them quiet, and as the police sprang forward to meet the crowd I threw myself between them, with all the advantage of the position of the top of the steps that I had chosen, so that every man in the charging crowd saw me, and as they checked themselves in surprise I bade them stop for his sake, and keep for him the peace which he had bade us should not be broken. I heard afterwards that as I sprang forward the police laughed—they must have thought me a fool to face the rush of the charging men, but I knew his friends would never trample me down, and as the crowd stopped the laugh died out, and they drew back and left me my own way.

Sullenly the men drew back, mastering themselves with effort, reining in their wrath, still for his sake. Ah! had I known what was going on inside, would I have kept his trust unbroken! and, as many a man said to me afterwards in northern towns, 'Oh! if you had let us go we would have carried him into the House up to the Speaker's chair.' We heard a crash inside, and listened and there was sound of breaking glass and splintering wood, and in a few minutes a messenger came to me. He is in Palace Yard. And we went thither and saw him standing, still and white face set like marble, coat torn, motionless, as though carved in stone facing the members' door. Now

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we know the whole shameful story : how as that one man stood alone, on his way to claim his right, alone so that he could do no violence, fourteen men, said the Central News, police and ushers, flung themselves upon him, pushed and pulled him down the stairs, smashing in their violence the glass and wood of the passage door ; how he struck no blow, but used only his great strength in passive resistance —“ Of all I have ever seen, I never saw one man struggle with ten like that,” said one of the chiefs, angrily disdainful of the wrong he was forced to do—till they flung him out into Palace Yard. An eye-witness thus reported the scene in the Press : “ The strong, broad, heavy, powerful frame of Mr. Bradlaugh was hard to move, with its every nerve and muscle strained to resist the coercion. Bending and straining against the overpowering numbers, he held every inch with surprising tenacity, and only surrendered it after almost superhuman exertions to retain it. The sight—little of it as was seen from the outside—soon became sickening. The overborn man appeared almost at his last gasp. The face, in spite of the warmth of the struggle, had an ominous pallor. The limbs barely sustained him. . . . The Trafalgar Square phrase that this man might be broken but not bent occurred to minds apprehensive at the present appearance of him.”

They flung him out, and swift, short words were there interchanged. “ I nearly did wrong at the door,” he said afterwards, “ I was very angry. I said to Inspector Denning, ‘ I shall come again with force enough to

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overcome it ' He said, ' When ? ' I said, ' Within a minute if I raise my hand ' " He stood in Palace Yard, and there outside the gate was a vast sea of heads, the men who had journeyed from all parts of England for love of him, and in defence of the great right he represented of a constituency to send to Parliament the man of its choice Ah ! he was never greater than in that moment of outrage and of triumphant wrong , with all the passion of a proud man surging within him, insulted by physical violence, injured by the cruel wrenching of all his muscles—so that for weeks his arms had to be swathed in bandages—he was never greater than when he conquered his own wrath, crushed down his own longing for battle, stirred to flame by the bodily struggle, and the bodily injury, and with thousands waiting within sound of his voice longing to leap to his side, he gave the word to tell them to meet him that evening away from the scene of conflict, and meanwhile to disperse quietly, " no riot no disorder But how he suffered mentally no words of mine may tell and none can understand how it wrung his heart who does not know how he revered the great Parliament of England, how he honoured law how he believed in justice being done , it was the breaking down of his national ideals, of his pride in his country, of his belief that faith would be kept with a foe by English gentlemen, who with all their faults, he thought, held honour and chivalry dear " No man will sleep in gaol for me to-night " he said to me that day , " no woman can blame me for her husband killed or wounded, but—— ' A

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wave of agony swept over his face, and from that fatal day Charles Bradlaugh was never the same man. Some hold their ideals lightly, but his heart-strings were twined round his ; some care little for their country—he was an Englishman, law-abiding, liberty-loving, to his heart's core, of the type of the seventeenth-century patriot, holding England's honour dear. It was the treachery that broke his heart ; he had gone alone, believing in the honour of his foes, ready to submit to expulsion, to imprisonment, and it was the latter that he expected ; but he never dreamed that, going alone amongst his foes, they would use brutal and cowardly violence, and shame every Parliamentary tradition by personal outrage on a duly-elected member, outrage more worthy of a slum pot-house than of the great Commons House, the House of Hampden and of Vane, the House that had guarded its own from Royal violence, and had maintained its privileges in the teeth of kings.

These stormy scenes brought about a promise of Government aid ; Mr. Bradlaugh failed to get any legal redress, as, indeed, he expected to fail, on the ground that the officials of the House were covered by the House's order, but the Government promised to support his claim to his seat during the next session, and thus prevented the campaign against them on which we had resolved. I had solely on my own responsibility organised a great band of people pledged to refrain from the use of all excisable articles after a certain date, and to withdraw all their moneys in the Savings Bank, thus seriously crippling the

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financial resources of the Government    The response from the workers to my appeal to "Stop the supplies" was great and touching    One man wrote that as he never drank nor smoked he would leave off tea, others that though tobacco was their one luxury, they would forego it, and so on    Somewhat reluctantly, I asked the people to lay aside this formidable weapon, as we have no right to embarrass the Government financially save when they refuse to do the first duty of a Government to maintain law    They have now promised to do justice, and we must wait    Meanwhile the injuries inflicted on Mr Bradlaugh, rupturing the sheaths of some of the muscles of the arm, laid him prostrate, and various small fights went on during the temporary truce in the great struggle    I turned up in the House two or three times, hailed thither, though not in person, by the people who kept Mr Bradlaugh out, and a speech of mine became the subject of a question by Mr Ritchie, while Sir Henry Tyler waged war on the science classes    Another joy was added to life by the use of my name—which by all these struggles had gained a marketable value—as author of pamphlets I had never seen, and this forgery of my name by unscrupulous people in the colonies caused me a good deal of annoyance    In the strengthening of the constitutional agitation in the country, the holding of an International Congress of Freethinkers in London, the studying and teaching of science the delivering of courses of scientific lectures in the Hall of Science, a sharp correspondence with the Bishop of Manchester, who had libelled

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Secularists, and which led to a fiery pamphlet, "God's Views on Marriage," as retort—in all these matters the autumn months sped rapidly away.

One incident of that autumn I record with regret. I was misled by very partial knowledge of the nature of the experiments performed, and by my fear that if scientific men were forbidden to experiment on animals with drugs they would perforce experiment with them on the poor in hospitals, to write two articles, republished as a pamphlet, against Sir Eardley Wilmot's Bill for the "Total Suppression of Vivisection." I limited my approval to highly skilled men engaged in original investigations, and took the representations made of the character of the experiments without sufficient care to verify them. Hence the publication of the one thing I ever wrote for which I feel deep regret and shame, as against the whole trend and efforts of my life. I am thankful to say that Dr. Anna Kingsford answered my articles, and I readily inserted her replies in the paper in which mine had appeared—our *National Reformer*—and she touched that question of the moral sense to which my nature at once responded. Ultimately, I looked carefully into the subject, found that vivisection abroad was very different from vivisection in England, saw that it was in very truth the fiendishly cruel thing that its opponents alleged, and destroyed my partial defence of even its less brutal form.

1882 saw no cessation of the struggles in which Mr. Bradlaugh and those who stood by him were involved.

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On February 7th he was heard for the third time at the Bar of the House of Commons, and closed his speech with an offer that, accepted, would have closed the contest "I am ready to stand aside, say for four or five weeks, without coming to that table, if the House within that time, or within such time as its great needs might demand, would discuss whether an Affirmation Bill should pass or not I want to obey the law, and I tell you how I might meet the House still further, if the House will pardon me for seeming to advise it Hon members have said that would be a Bradlaugh Relief Bill Bradlaugh is more proud than you are Let the Bill pass without applying to elections that have taken place previously, and I will undertake not to claim my seat, and when the Bill has passed I will apply for the Chiltern Hundreds I have no fear If I am not fit for my constituents, they shall dismiss me, but you never shall. The grave alone shall make me yield But the House would do nothing He had asked for 100,000 signatures in favour of his constitutional right, and on February 8th, 9th, and 10th 1,008 petitions, bearing 241,970 signatures, were presented, the House treated them with contemptuous indifference The House refused to declare his seat vacant, and also refused to allow him to fill it, thus half-disfranchising Northampton while closing every avenue to legal redress Mr Labouchere—who did all a loyal colleague could do to assist his brother member—brought in an Affirmation Bill, it was blocked Mr Gladstone, appealed to to support the law declared by his own

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Attorney-General, refused to do anything. An *impasse* was created, and all the enemies of freedom rejoiced. Out of this position of what the *Globe* called "quiet omnipotence" the House was shaken by an audacious defiance, for on February 21st the member it was trying to hold at arm's length took the oath in its startled face, went to his seat, and—waited events. The House then expelled him—and, indeed, it could scarcely do anything else after such defiance—and Mr. Labouchere moved for a new writ, declaring that Northampton was ready, its "candidate" was Charles Bradlaugh, expelled this House." Northampton, ever steadfast, returned him for the third time—the vote in his favour showing an increase of 359 over the second bye-election—and the triumph was received in all the great towns of England with wild enthusiasm. By the small majority of fifteen in a House of 599 members—and this due to the vacillation of the Government—he was again refused the right to take his seat. But now the whole Liberal Press took up his quarrel; the oath question became a test question for every candidate for Parliament, and the Government was warned that it was alienating its best friends. The *Pall Mall Gazette* voiced the general feeling. "What is the evidence that an Oaths Bill would injure the Government in the country? Of one thing we may be sure, that if they shirk the Bill they will do no good to themselves at the elections. Nobody doubts that it will be made a test question, and any Liberal who declines to vote for such a Bill will certainly lose the support of the



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Northampton sort of Radicalism in every constituency. The Liberal Press throughout the country is absolutely unanimous. The Political Non-conformists are for it. The local clubs are for it. All that is wanted is that the Government should pick up a little more moral courage and recognise that even in practice honesty is the best policy. The Government did not think so and they paid the penalty, for one of the causes that led to their defeat at the polls was the disgust felt at their vacillation and cowardice in regard to the rights of constituencies. Not untruly did I write, in May 1882 that Charles Bradlaugh was a man "who by the infliction of a great wrong had become the incarnation of a great principle" for the agitation in the country grew and grew until returned again to Parliament at the General Election he took the oath and his seat, brought in and carried an Oaths Bill not only giving Members of Parliament the right to affirm but making Free-thinkers competent as jurymen and relieving witnesses from the insult hitherto put upon those who objected to swearing he thus ended an unprecedented struggle by a complete victory weaving his name for ever into the constitutional history of his country.

In the House of Lords Lord Redesdale brought in a Bill disqualifying Atheists from sitting in Parliament, but in face of the feeling aroused in the country the Lords, with many pathetic expressions of regret declined to pass it. But, meanwhile Sir Henry Tyler in the Commons was calling out for prosecutions for blasphemy to be brought

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against Mr. Bradlaugh and his friends, while he carried on his crusade against Mr. Bradlaugh's daughters, Dr. Aveling, and myself, as science teachers. I summed up the position in the spring of 1882 in the following somewhat strong language: "This short-lived 'Parliamentary Declaration Bill' is but one of the many clouds which presage a storm of prosecution. The reiterated attempts in the House of Commons to force the Government into prosecuting heretics for blasphemy; the petty and vicious attacks on the science classes at the Hall; the odious and wicked efforts of Mr. Newdegate to drive Mr. Bradlaugh into the Bankruptcy Court; all these are but signs that the heterogeneous army of pious and bigoted Christians are gathering together their forces for a furious attack on those who have silenced them in argument, but whom they hope to conquer by main force, by sheer brutality. Let them come. Freethinkers were never so strong, never so united, never so well organised as they are to-day. Strong in the goodness of our cause, in our faith in the ultimate triumph of Truth, in our willingness to give up all save fidelity to the sacred cause of liberty of human thought and human speech, we await gravely and fearlessly the successors of the men who burned Bruno, who imprisoned Galileo, who tortured Vanini—the men who have in their hands the blood-red cross of Jesus of Nazareth, and in their hearts the love of God and the hate of man."

## CHAPTER XII

### STILL FIGHTING

ALL this hot fighting on the religious field did not render me blind to the misery of the Irish land so dear to my heart, writhing in the cruel grip of Mr Forster's Coercion Act. An article "Coercion in Ireland and its Results," exposing the wrongs done under the Act, was reprinted as a pamphlet and had a wide circulation

I pleaded against eviction—7,020 persons had been evicted during the quarter ending in March—for the trial of those imprisoned on suspicion, for indemnity for those who before the Land Act had striven against wrongs the Land Act had been carried to prevent, and I urged that "no chance is given for the healing measures to cure the sore of Irish disaffection until not only are the prisoners in Ireland set at liberty, but until the brave, unfortunate Michael Davitt stands once more a free man on Irish soil" At last the Government reconsidered its policy and resolved on juster dealings; it sent Lord Frederick Cavendish over to Ireland, carrying with him the release of the "suspects," and scarcely had he landed ere the knife of assassination

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struck him—a foul and cowardly murder of an innocent messenger of peace. I was at Blackburn, to lecture on “The Irish Question,” and as I was walking towards the platform, my heart full of joy for the dawning hope of peace, a telegram announcing the assassination was placed in my hands. Never shall I forget the shock, the incredulous horror, the wave of despair. “It is not only two men they have killed,” I wrote, a day or two later; “they have stabbed the new-born hope of friendship between two countries, and have reopened the gulf of hatred that was just beginning to close.” Alas! the crime succeeded in its object, and hurried the Government into new wrong. Hastily a new Coercion Bill was brought in, and rushed through its stages in Parliament, and, facing the storm of public excitement, I pleaded still, “Force no remedy,” despite the hardship of the task. “There is excessive difficulty in dealing with the Irish difficulty at the present moment. Tories are howling for revenge on a whole nation as answer to the crime committed by a few; Whigs are swelling the outcry; many Radicals are swept away by the current, and feeling that ‘something must be done,’ they endorse the Government action, forgetting to ask whether the ‘something’ proposed is the wisest thing. A few stand firm, but they are very few—too few to prevent the new Coercion Bill from passing into law. But few though we be who lift up the voice of protest against the wrong which we are powerless to prevent, we may yet do much to make the new Act of brief duration, by so rousing public

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opinion as to bring about its early repeal. When the measure is understood by the public half the battle will be won ; it is accepted at the moment from faith in the Government ; it will be rejected when its true character is grasped. The murders which have given birth to this repressive measure came with a shock upon the country, which was the more terrible from the sudden change from gladness and hope to darkness and despair. The new policy was welcomed so joyfully, the messenger of the new policy was slain ere yet the pen was dry which had signed the orders of mercy and of liberty. Small wonder that cry of horror should be followed by measures of vengeance, but the murders were the work of a few criminals, while the measure of vengeance strikes the whole of the Irish people. I plead against the panic which confounds political agitation and political redressal of wrong with crime and its punishment, the Government measure gags every mouth in Ireland, and puts, as we shall see, all political effort at the mercy of the Lord-Lieutenant the magistracy, and the police." I then sketched the misery of the peasants in the grip of absentee landlords, the turning out on the roadside to die of the mother with new-born babe at her breast, the loss of "all thought of the sanctity of human life when the lives of the dearest are reckoned as less worth than the shillings of overdue rack-rental." I analysed the new Act. "When this Act passes, trial by jury, right of public meeting, liberty of press, sanctity of house, will one and all be held at the will of the Lord-Lieutenant, the irresponsible

autocrat of Ireland, while the liberty of person will lie at the mercy of every constable. Such is England's way of governing Ireland in the year 1882. And this is supposed to be a Bill for the 'repression of crime.' " Bluntly, I put the bald truth : " The plain fact is that the murderers have succeeded. They saw in the new policy the reconciliation of England and Ireland ; they knew that friendship would follow justice, and that the two countries, for the first time in history, would clasp hands. To prevent this they dug a new gulf, which they hoped the English nation would not span ; they sent a river of blood across the road of friendship, and they flung two corpses to bar the newly-opened gate of reconciliation and peace. They have succeeded."

Into this whirl of political and social strife came the first whisper to me of the Theosophical Society, in the shape of a statement of its principles, which conveyed, I remarked, " no very definite idea of the requirements for membership, beyond a dreamy, emotional, scholarly, interest in the religio-philosophic fancies of the past." Also a report of an address by Colonel Olcott, which led me to suppose that the society held to " some strange theory of ' apparitions ' of the dead, and to some existence outside the physical and apart from it." These came to me from some Hindû Freethinkers, who asked my opinion as to Secularists joining the Theosophical Society; and Theosophists being admitted to the National Secular Society. I replied, judging from these reports, that " while Secularists would have no right to refuse to enrol Theosophists, if they

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desired it, among their members, there is a radical difference between the mysticism of Theosophy and the scientific materialism of Secularism. The exclusive devotion to this world implied in the profession of Secularism leaves no room for other-worldism, and consistent members of our body cannot join a society which professes belief therein ' '.

H. P. Blavatsky penned a brief article in the *Theosophist* for August 1882, in which she commented on my paragraph, remarking, in her generous way, that it must have been written "while labouring under entirely misconceived notions about the real nature of our society. For one so highly intellectual and keen as that renowned writer to dogmatise and issue autocratic ukases, after she has herself suffered so cruelly and undeservedly at the hands of blind bigotry and social prejudice in her lifelong struggle for *freedom of thought* seems to say the least, absurdly inconsistent". After quoting my paragraph she went on "Until proofs to the contrary, we prefer to believe that the above lines were dictated to Mrs Besant by some crafty misrepresentations from Madras, inspired by a mean personal revenge rather than a desire to remain consistent with the principles of 'the scientific materialism of Secularism'. We beg to assure the Radical editors of the *National Reformer* that they were both very strangely misled by false reports about the Radical editors of the *Theosophist*. The term 'supernaturalists' can no

<sup>1</sup> *National Reformer* June 18 1882

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more apply to the latter than to Mrs. A. Besant and Mr. C. Bradlaugh."

H. P. Blavatsky, when she commented, as she occasionally did, on the struggles going on in England, took of them a singularly large-hearted and generous view. She referred with much admiration to Mr. Bradlaugh's work and to his Parliamentary struggle, and spoke warmly of the services he had rendered to liberty. Again, in pointing out that spiritualistic trance orations by no means transcended speeches that made no such claim, I find her first mention of myself: "Another lady orator, of deservedly great fame, both for eloquence and learning—the good Mrs. Annie Besant—without believing in controlling spirits, or for that matter in her own spirit, yet speaks and writes such sensible and wise things, that we might almost say that one of her speeches or chapters contains more matter to benefit humanity than would equip a modern trance-speaker for an entire oratorical career."<sup>1</sup> I have sometimes wondered of late years whether, had I met her then or seen any of her writings, I should have become her pupil. I fear not; I was still too much dazzled by the triumphs of Western Science, too self-assertive, too fond of combat, too much at the mercy of my own emotions, too sensitive to praise and blame. I needed to sound yet more deeply the depths of human misery, to hear yet more loudly the moaning of "the great Orphan," Humanity, to feel yet more keenly the lack of wider knowledge and of clearer light if I were to

<sup>1</sup> *Theosophist*, June, 1882.



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give effective help to man, ere I could bow my pride to crave admittance as pupil to the School of Occultism, ere I could put aside my prejudices and study the Science of the Soul

The long-continued attempts of Sir Henry Tyler and his friends to stimulate persecutions for blasphemy at length took practical shape, and in July, 1882, Mr Foote, the editor, Mr Ramsey, the publisher, and Mr Whittle, the printer of the *Freethinker*, were summoned for blasphemy by Sir Henry Tyler himself. An attempt was made to involve Mr Bradlaugh in the proceedings, and the solicitors promised to drop the case against the editor and printer if Mr Bradlaugh would himself sell them some copies of the paper. But however ready Mr Bradlaugh had always shown himself to shield his subordinates by taking his sins on his own shoulders, he saw no reason why he should assume responsibility for a paper over which he had no control, and which was, he thought by its caricatures, lowering the tone of Freethought advocacy and giving an unnecessary handle to its foes. He therefore answered that he would sell the solicitors any works published by himself or with his authority and sent them a catalogue of the whole of such works. The object of this effort of Sir Henry Tyler's was obvious enough, and Mr Bradlaugh commented "The above letters make it pretty clear that Sir Henry W Tyler having failed in his endeavour to get the science classes stopped at the Hall of Science, having also failed in his attempt to induce Sir W Vernon Harcourt to prosecute myself and Mrs Besant as editors and

publishers of this journal, desires to make me personally and criminally responsible for the contents of a journal I neither edit nor publish, over which I have not a shadow of control, and in which I have not the smallest interest. Why does Sir H. W. Tyler so ardently desire to prosecute me for blasphemy? Is it because two convictions will under the 9th and 10th Will. III. cap. 32, render me 'for ever' incapable of sitting in Parliament?" The *Whitehall Review* frankly put this forward as an object to be gained, and Mr. Bradlaugh was summoned to the Mansion House on a charge of publishing blasphemous libels in the *Freethinker*; meanwhile Sir Henry Tyler put a notice on the Order Book to deprive "the daughters of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh" of the grant they had earned as science teachers, and got an order which proved to be invalid, but which was acted on, to inspect Mr. Bradlaugh's and my own private banking accounts, I being no party to the case. Looking back, I marvel at the incredible meannesses to which Sir Henry Tyler and others stooped in defence of "religion"—Heaven save the mark! Let me add that his motion in the House of Commons was a complete failure, and it was emphasised by the publication at the same time of the successful work, both as teachers and as students, of the "daughters of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh," and of my being the only student in all England who had succeeded in taking honours in botany.

I must pause a moment to chronicle, in September, 1882, the death of Dr. Pusey, whom I had sought in the

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whirl of my early religious struggles I wrote an article on him in the *National Reformer*, and ended by laying a tribute on his grave "A strong man and a good man Utterly out of harmony with the spirit of his own time, looking with sternly-rebuking eyes on all the eager research, the joyous love of nature, the earnest inquiry into a world doomed to be burnt up at the coming of its Judge An ascetic, pure in life, stern in faith harsh to unbelievers because sincere in his own cruel creed generous and tender to all who accepted his doctrines and submitted to his Church He never stooped to slander those with whom he disagreed His hatred of heresy led him not to blacken the character of heretics, nor to descend to the vulgar abuse used by pettier priests And therefore I who honour courage and sincerity wherever I find them, I, who do homage to steadfastness wherever I find it I, Atheist, lay my small tribute of respect on the bier of this noblest of the Anglo-Catholics, Edward Bouverie Pusey "

As a practical answer to the numberless attacks made on us, and as a result of the enormous increase of circulation given to our theological and political writings by these harassing persecutions, we moved our publishing business to 63, Fleet Street, at the end of September, 1882, a shop facing that at which Richard Carlile had carried on his publishing business for a great time, and so seeming still redolent with memories of his gallant struggles Two of the first things sold here were a pamphlet of mine, a strong protest against our shameful Egyptian policy, and a critical volume

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on "Genesis" which Mr. Bradlaugh found time to write in the intervals of his busy life. Here I worked daily, save when out of London, until Mr. Bradlaugh's death in 1891, assisted in the conduct of the business by Mr. Bradlaugh's elder daughter—a woman of strong character with many noble qualities, who died rather suddenly in December, 1888, and in the work on the *National Reformer*, first by Dr. Aveling, and then by Mr. John Robertson, its present editor. Here, too, from 1884 onwards, worked with me Thornton Smith, one of Mr. Bradlaugh's most devoted disciples, who became one of the leading speakers of the National Secular Society; like her well-loved chief, she was ever a good friend and a good fighter, and to me the most loyal and loving of colleagues, one of the few—the very few—Freethinkers who were large-hearted and generous enough not to turn against me when I became a Theosophist. A second of these—alas! I could count them on my fingers—was the John Robertson above mentioned, a man of rare ability and wide culture, somewhat too scholarly for popular propagandism of the most generally effective order, but a man who is a strength to any movement, always on the side of noble living and high thinking, loyal-natured as the true Scot should be, incapable of meanness or treachery, and the most genial and generous of friends.

Among the new literary ventures that followed on our taking the large publishing premises in Fleet Street was a sixpenny magazine, edited by myself, and entitled *Our*

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*Corner*, its first number was dated January, 1883, and for six years it appeared regularly and served me as a useful mouthpiece in my Socialist and Labour propagandist work. Among its contributors were Moncure D Conway, Professor Ludwig Buchner, Yves Guyot, Professor Ernst Hæckel, G Bernard Shaw, Constance Naden Dr Aveling, J H Levy, J L Joynes, Mrs Edgren, John Robertson, and many another, Charles Bradlaugh and I writing regularly each month.

1883 broke stormily fights on every hand, and a huge constitutional agitation going on in the country which forced the Government into bringing in an Affirmation Bill, resolutions from Liberal Associations all over the land, preparations to oppose the re-election of disloyal members, no less than a thousand delegates sent up to London by clubs, Trade Unions, associations of every sort, a meeting that packed Trafalgar Square an uneasy crowd in Westminster Hall, a request from Inspector Denning that Mr Bradlaugh would go out to them—they feared for his safety inside, a word from him, The Government have pledged themselves to bring in an Affirmation Bill at once, 'roar after roar of cheering, a veritable people's victory on that 15th of February, 1883. It was the answer of the country to the appeal for justice, the rebuke of the electors to the House that had defied them.

Scarcely was this over when a second prosecution for blasphemy against Messrs Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp began, and was hurried on in the Central Criminal Court,

before Mr. Justice North, a bigot of the sternest type. The trial ended in a disagreement of the jury, Mr. Foote defending himself in a splendid speech. The judge acted very harshly throughout, interrupted Mr. Foote continuously, and even refused bail to the defendants during the interval between the first and second trial ; they were, therefore, confined in Newgate from Thursday to Monday, and we were only allowed to see them through iron bars and lattice, as they exercised in the prison yard between 8.30 and 9.30 a.m. Brought up to trial again on Monday, they were convicted, and Mr. Foote was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, Mr. Ramsey to nine months, and Mr. Kemp to three months. Mr. Foote especially behaved with great dignity and courage in a most difficult position, and heard his cruel sentence without wincing, and with the calm words, " My Lord, I thank you ; it is worthy your creed." A few of us at once stepped in, to preserve to Mr. Ramsey his shop, and to Mr. Foote his literary property ; Dr. Aveling undertook the editing of the *Freethinker* and of Mr. Foote's magazine *Progress* ; the immediate necessities of their families were seen to ; Mr. and Mrs. Forder took charge of the shop, and within a few days all was in working order. Disapproving as many of us did of the policy of the paper, there was no time to think of that when a blasphemy prosecution had proved successful, and we all closed up in the support of men imprisoned for conscience' sake. I commenced a series of articles on " The Christian Creed ; what it is blasphemy to deny," showing what Christians

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must believe under peril of prosecution. Everywhere a tremendous impulse was given to the Freethought movement, as men awakened to the knowledge that blasphemy laws were not obsolete.

From over the sea came a word of sympathy from the pen of H. P. Blavatsky in the *Theosophist*. "We prefer Mr. Foote's actual position to that of his severe judge. Aye, and were we in his guilty skin, we would feel more proud, even in the poor editor's present position, than we would under the wig of Mr. Justice North."

In April, 1883, the long legal struggles of Mr. Bradlaugh against Mr. Newdegate and his common informer, that had lasted from July 2, 1880, till April 9, 1883, ended in his complete victory by the judgment of the House of Lords in his favour. "Court after Court decided against me," he wrote, "and Whig and Tory journals alike mocked at me for my persistent resistance. Even some good friends thought that my fight was hopeless, and that the bigots held me fast in their toils. I have, however, at last shaken myself free of Mr. Newdegate and his common informer. The judgment of the House of Lords in my favour is final and conclusive, and the boasts of the Tories that I should be made bankrupt for the penalties, have now, for ever, come to naught. Yet but for the many poor folk who have stood by me with their help and sympathy, I should have long since been ruined. The days and weeks spent in the Law Courts, the harassing work connected with each stage of litigation, the watching daily when each

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hearing was imminent, the absolute hindrance of all provincial lecturing—it is hardly possible for any one to judge the terrible mental and pecuniary strain of all this long-drawn-out struggle.” Aye! it killed him at last, twenty years before his time, sapping his splendid vitality, undermining his iron constitution.

The blasphemy trial of Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Foote, and Mr. Ramsey now came on, but this time in the Queen’s Bench, before the Lord Chief Justice Coleridge. I had the honour of sitting between Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote, charged with the duty of having ready for the former all his references, and with a duplicate brief to mark off point after point as he dealt with it. Messrs. Foote and Ramsey were brought up in custody, but were brave and bright with courage unbroken. Mr. Bradlaugh applied to have his case taken separately, as he denied responsibility for the paper, and the judge granted the application; it was clearly proved that he and I—the “Freethought Publishing Company”—had never had anything to do with the production of the paper; that until November, 1881, we published it, and then refused to publish it any longer; that the reason for the refusal was the addition of comic Bible illustrations as a feature of the paper. I was called as witness and began with a difficulty; claiming to affirm, I was asked by the judge if the oath would not be binding on my conscience; I answered that any promise was binding on me whatever the form, and after some little argument the judge found a way out of the insulting form



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by asking whether the "invocation of the Deity added anything to it of a binding nature—added any sanction?" "None, my Lord," was the prompt reply, and I was allowed to affirm. Sir Hardinge Giffard subjected me to a very stringent cross-examination, doing his best to entangle me, but the perfect frankness of my answers broke all his weapons of finesse and innuendo.

Some of the incidents of the trial were curious. Sir Hardinge Giffard's opening speech was very able and very unscrupulous. All facts in Mr. Bradlaugh's favour were distorted or hidden, anything that could be used against him was tricked out in most seductive fashion. Among the many monstrous perversions of the truth made by this most pious counsel, was the statement that changes of publisher, and of registration of the *Freethinker* were made in consequence of a question as to prosecuting it put in the House of Commons. The change of publisher was admittedly made in November, the registration was made for the first time in November, and could not be changed, as there was no previous one. The House of Commons was not sitting in November, the question alluded to was asked in the following February. This one deliberate lie of the "defender of the faith" will do as well as quoting a score of others to show how wickedly and maliciously he endeavoured to secure an unjust verdict.

The speech over, a number of witnesses were called. Sir Hardinge did not call witnesses who knew the facts, such as Mr. Norrish, the shopman, or Mr. Whittle, the printer.

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These he carefully avoided, although he subpœnaed both, because he did not want the real facts to come out. But he put in two solicitor's clerks, who had been hanging about the premises, and buying endless *National Reformers* and *Freethinkers*, sheaves of them which were never used, but by which Sir Hardinge hoped to convey the impression of a mass of criminality. He put in a gentleman from the British Museum, who produced two large books, presumed to be *National Reformers* and *Freethinkers*; what they were brought for nobody understood, the counsel for the Crown as little as any one, and the judge, surveying them over his spectacles, treated them with supreme contempt, as utterly irrelevant. Then a man came to prove that Mr. Bradlaugh was rated for Stonecutter Street, a fact no one disputed. Two policemen came to say they had seen him go in. "You saw many people go in, I suppose?" queried the Lord Chief Justice. On the whole the most miserably weak and obviously malicious case that could be brought into a court of law.

One witness, however, must not be forgotten—Mr. Woodhams, bank manager. When he stated that Mr. Maloney, the junior counsel for the Crown, had inspected Mr. Bradlaugh's banking account, a murmur of surprise and indignation ran round the court. "Oh! oh!" was heard from the crowd of barristers behind. The judge looked down incredulously, and for a moment the examination was stopped by the general movement. Unless Sir Hardinge Giffard is a splendid actor, he was not aware of the

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infamous proceeding, for he looked as startled as the rest of his legal brethren

Another queer incident occurred, showing perhaps more than aught else, Mr Bradlaugh's swift perception of the situation and adaptation to the environment. He wanted to read the Mansion House deposition of Norrish, to show why he was not called—the judge objected and declined to allow it to be read. A pause while you might count five, then, “Well, I think I may say the learned counsel did not call Norrish because—” and then the whole substance of the deposition was given in supposititious form. The judge looked down a minute, and then went off into silent laughter impossible to control at the adroit change of means and persistent gaining of end, barristers all round broke into ripples of laughter unrestrained, a broad smile pervaded the jury box—the only unmoved person was the defendant who proceeded in his grave statement as to what Norrish might have been asked. The nature of the defence was very clearly stated by Mr Bradlaugh: “I shall ask you to find that this prosecution is one of the steps in a vindictive attempt to oppress and to crush a political opponent—that it was a struggle that commenced on my return to Parliament in 1880. If the prosecutor had gone into the box I should have shown you that he was one of the first then in the House to use the suggestion of blasphemy against me there. Since then I have never had any peace until the Monday of this week. Writs for penalties have been served, and

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suits of all kinds have been taken against me. On Monday last the House of Lords cleared me from the whole of one set, and, gentlemen, I ask you to-day to clear me from another. Three times I have been re-elected by my constituents, and what Sir Henry Tyler asks you to do is to send me to them branded with the dishonour of a conviction, branded not with the conviction for publishing heresy, but branded with the conviction, dishonourable to me, of having lied in this matter. I have no desire to have a prison's walls closed on me, but I would sooner ten times that, than that my constituents should think that for one moment I lied to escape the penalties. I am not indicted for anything I have ever written or caused to be written. As my Lord at the very first stage this morning pointed out. it is no question with me, Are the matters indicted blasphemous, or are they not blasphemous? Are they defensible, or are they not defensible? That is not my duty here. On this I make no comment. I have no duty here of even discussing the policy of the blasphemy laws, although I cannot help thinking that, if I were here making my defence against them, I might say that they were bad laws unfairly revived, doing more mischief to those who revive them than to those whom they are revived against. But it is not for anything I have said myself; it is not for anything I have written myself; it is not for anything I have published myself. It is an endeavour to make me technically liable for a publication with which I have nothing whatever to do, and I will ask you to defeat that here.

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Every time I have succeeded I have been met with some new thing When I first fought it was hoped to defeat my election When I was re-elected it was sought to make me bankrupt by enormous penalties and when I escaped the suit for enormous penalties they hope now to destroy me by this I have no question here about defending my heresy, not because I am not ready to defend it when it is challenged in the right way, and if there be anything in it that the law can challenge I have never gone back from anything I have ever said, I have never gone back from anything I have ever written, I have never gone back from anything I have ever done, and I ask you not to allow this Sir Henry Whatley Tyler, who dares not come here to-day, to use you as the assassin uses the dagger, to stab a man from behind whom he never dares to face

The summing up by Lord Coleridge was perfect in eloquence, in thought, in feeling Nothing more touching could be imagined than the conflict between the real religious feeling, abhorrent of heresy, and the determination to be just, despite all prejudice The earnest effort lest the prejudice he felt as a Christian should weigh also in the minds of the jury, and should cause them to pervert justice The absolute pleading to them to do what was right and not to admit against the unbeliever what they would not admit in ordinary cases Then the protest against prosecution of opinions, the admission of the difficulties in the Hebrew Scriptures, and the pathetic fear lest by persecution "the sacred truths might be struck through the sides of

those who are their enemies." For intellectual clearness and moral elevation this exquisite piece of eloquence, delivered in a voice of silvery beauty, would be hard to excel, and Lord Coleridge did this piece of service to the religion so dear to his heart, that he showed that a Christian judge could be just and righteous in dealing with a foe of his creed.

There was a time of terrible strain waiting for the verdict, and when at last it came, "Not Guilty," a sharp clap of applause hailed it, sternly and rightly reproved by the judge. It was echoed by the country which almost unanimously condemned the prosecution as an iniquitous attempt on the part of Mr. Bradlaugh's political enemies to put a stop to his political career. Thus the *Pall Mall Gazette* wrote :

"Whatever may be the personal or political or religious aversion which is excited by Mr. Bradlaugh, it is impossible for even his bitterest opponents to deny the brilliance of the series of victories which he has won in the law courts. His acquittal in the blasphemy prosecution of Saturday was but the latest of a number of encounters in which he has succeeded in turning the tables upon his opponents in the most decisive fashion. The policy of baiting Mr. Bradlaugh which has been persisted in so long, savours so strongly of a petty and malignant species of persecution that it is well that those who indulge in it should be made to smart for their pains. The wise and weighty words used by the Lord Chief Justice in summing up should



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be taken seriously to heart. Those persons are to be deprecated who would pervert the law even with the best intentions, and "do evil that good may come" whose damnation (says the apostle) is just. Without emulating the severity of the apostle we may say that it is satisfactory that the promoters of all these prosecutions should be condemned in costs.

In the separate trial of Messrs Foote and Ramsey Mr Foote again defended himself in a speech of marked ability, and spoken of by the judge as very striking. Lord Coleridge made a noble charge to the jury in which he strongly condemned prosecutions of unpopular opinions pointing out that no prosecution short of extermination could be effective and caustically remarking on the very easy form of virtue indulged in by persecutors. As a general rule he said persecution unless far more extreme than in England in the nineteenth century is possible, is certain to be in vain. It is also true and I cannot help assenting to it, that it is a very easy form of virtue. It is a more difficult form of virtue quietly and unostentatiously to obey what we believe to be God's will in our own lives. It is not very easy to do it and it makes much less noise in the world. It is very easy to turn upon somebody else who differs from us and in the guise of zeal of God's honour to attack somebody of a difference of opinion, whose life may be more pleasing to God and more conducive to His honour than our own. And when it is done by persons whose own lives are not free from reproach and

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who take that particular form of zeal for God which consists in putting the criminal law in force against others, that, no doubt, does more to create a sympathy with the defendant than with the prosecutor. And if it should be done by those who enjoy the wit of Voltaire, and who do not turn away from the sneers of Gibbon, and rather relish the irony of Hume, our feelings do not go with the prosecutors, and we are rather disposed to sympathise with the defendant. It is still worse if the person who takes such a course takes it, not from a kind of notion that God wants his assistance, and that he can give it less on his own account than by prosecuting others—but it is mixed up with anything of partisan or political feeling, then nothing can be more foreign to what is high-minded, or religious, or noble, in men's conduct ; and indeed, it seems to me that any one who will do that, not for the honour of God but for the purpose of the ban, deserves the most disdainful disapprobation."

The jury disagreed, and a *nolle prosequi* was entered. The net results of the trials were a large addition to the membership of the National Secular Society, an increase of circulation of Freethought literature, the raising of Mr. Foote for a time to a position of great influence and popularity, and the placing of his name in history as a brave martyr for liberty of speech. The offence against good taste will be forgotten ; the loyalty to conviction and to courage will remain. History does not ask if men who suffered for heresy ever published a rough word ; it asks,

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Were they brave in their steadfastness . were they faithful to the truth they saw ? It may be well to place on record Mr Foote's punishment for blasphemy he spent twenty-two hours out of the twenty-four alone in his cell . his only seat was a stool without a back . his employment was picking matting . his bed was a plank with a thin mattress . During the latter part of his imprisonment he was allowed some books

## CHAPTER XIII

### SOCIALISM

THE rest of 1883 passed in the usual way of hard work ; the Affirmation Bill was rejected, and the agitation for Constitutional right grew steadily ; the Liberal Press was won over, and Mr. Bradlaugh was beginning to earn golden opinions on all sides for his courage, his tenacity, and his self-control. A successful International Congress at Amsterdam took some of us over to the Northern Venice, where a most successful gathering was held. To me, personally, the year has a special interest, as being the one in which my attention was called, though only partially, to the Socialist movement. I had heard Louise Michelle lecture in the early spring ; a brief controversy in the *National Reformer* had interested me, but I had not yet concerned myself with the economic basis of Socialism ; I had realised that the land should be public property, but had not gone into the deeper economic causes of poverty, though the question was pressing with ever-increasing force on heart and brain. Of Socialist teaching I knew nothing, having studied only the older English Economists in my younger days. In 1884



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a more definite call to consider these teachings was to come, and I may perhaps open the record of 1884 with the words of greeting spoken by me to our readers in the first number of the *Reformer* for that year "What tests 1884 may have for our courage, what strains on our endurance, what trials of our loyalty, none can tell But this we know—that every test of courage successfully met, every strain of endurance steadily borne, every trial of loyalty nobly surmounted leaves courage braver endurance stronger, loyalty truer, than each was before And therefore, for our own and for the world's sake I will not wish you, friends, an 1884 in which there shall be no toil and no battling; but I will wish you, each and all, the hero's heart and the hero's patience, in the struggle for the world's raising that will endure through the coming year "

On February 3rd I came for the first time across a paper called *Justice*, in which Mr Bradlaugh was attacked and which gave an account of a meeting of the Democratic Federation—not yet the Social Democratic—in which a man had, apparently unrebuked, said that "all means were justifiable to attain" working-class ends I protested strongly against the advocacy of criminal means, declaring that those who urged the use of such means were the worst foes of social progress. A few weeks later the *Echo* repeated a speech of Mr Hyndman's in which a "bloodier revolution" than that of France was prophesied, and the extinction of "book-learning" seemed coupled with the

success of Socialism, and this again I commented on. But I had the pleasure, a week later, of reprinting from *Justice* a sensible paragraph, condemning the advocacy of violence so long as free agitation was allowed.

This spring was marked by two events on which I have not time or space to dwell—the resignation by Mr. Bradlaugh of his seat, on the reiteration of the resolution of exclusion, and his triumphant return for the fourth time by an increased majority, a vote of 4,032, a higher poll than that of the general election ; and the release of Mr. Foote, on February 25th, from Holloway, whence he was escorted by a procession a quarter of a mile in length. On the 12th of March he and his fellow-prisoners received a magnificent reception and were presented with valuable testimonials at the Hall of Science.

Taking up again the thread of Socialism, the great debate in St. James's Hall, London, between Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Hyndman on April 17th, roused me to a serious study of the questions raised. Socialism has in England no more devoted, no more self-sacrificing advocate than Henry Hyndman. A man of wide and deep reading, wielding most ably a singularly fascinating pen, with talents that would have made him wealthy in any career he adopted, he has sacrificed himself without a murmur to the people's cause. He has borne obloquy from without, suspicion and unkindness from those he served, and surrounded by temptations to betray the people, he has never swerved from his integrity. He has said rash things, has been stirred



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to passionate outbursts and reckless phrases, but love to the people and sympathy with suffering lay at the root of his wildest words, and they count but little as against his faithful service. Personally, my debt to him is of a mixed character, he kept me from Socialism for some time by his bitter and very unjust antagonism to Mr Bradlaugh, but it was the debate at St James's Hall that, while I angrily resented his injustice, made me feel that there was something more in practical Socialism than I had imagined, especially when I read it over afterwards, away from the magic of Mr Bradlaugh's commanding eloquence and personal magnetism. It was a sore pity that English Socialists, from the outset of their movement, treated Mr Bradlaugh so unfairly, so that his friends were set against Socialists ere they began to examine their arguments. I must confess that my deep attachment to him led me into injustice to his Socialist foes in those early days, and often made me ascribe to them calculated malignity instead of hasty and prejudiced assertion. Added to this, their uncurbed violence in discussion, their constant interruptions during the speeches of opponents, their reckless inaccuracy in matters of fact, were all bars standing in the way of the thoughtful. When I came to know them better, I found that the bulk of their speakers were very young men, overworked and underpaid, who spent their scanty leisure in efforts to learn, to educate themselves, to train themselves, and I learned to pardon faults which grew out of the bitter sense of injustice, and which were due largely

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to the terrible pressure of our system on characters not yet strong enough—how few are strong enough!—to bear grinding injustice without loss of balance and of impartiality. None save those who have worked with them know how much of real nobility, of heroic self-sacrifice, of constant self-denial, of brotherly affection, there is among the Social Democrats.

At this time also I met George Bernard Shaw, one of the most brilliant of Socialist writers and most provoking of men; a man with a perfect genius for "aggravating" the enthusiastically earnest, and with a passion for representing himself as a scoundrel. On my first experience of him on the platform at South Place Institute he described himself as a "loafer," and I gave an angry snarl at him in the *Reformer*, for a loafer was my detestation, and behold! I found that he was very poor, because he was a writer with principles and preferred starving his body to starving his conscience; that he gave time and earnest work to the spreading of Socialism, spending night after night in workmen's clubs; and that "a loafer" was only an amiable way of describing himself because he did not carry a hod. Of course I had to apologise for my sharp criticism as doing him a serious injustice, but privately felt somewhat injured at having been entrapped into such a blunder. Meanwhile I was more and more turning aside from politics and devoting myself to the social condition of the people. I find myself, in June, protesting against Sir John Lubbock's Bill which fixed a twelve-hour day as the limit of a "young

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person's " toil " A ' day ' of twelve hours is brutal, ' I wrote, " if the law fixes twelve hours as a ' fair day ' that law will largely govern custom I declare that a ' legal day ' should be eight hours on five days in the week and not more than five hours on the sixth If the labour is of an exhausting character these hours are too long " On every side now the Socialist controversy grew, and I listened, read and thought much, but said little The inclusion of John Robertson in the staff of the *Reformer* brought a highly intellectual Socialist into closer touch with us, and slowly I found that the case for Socialism was intellectually complete and ethically beautiful The trend of my thought was shown by urging the feeding of Board School children, breaking down under the combination of education and starvation, and I asked, " Why should people be pauperised by a rate-supported meal, and not pauperised by state-supported police, drainage, road-mending street-lighting, etc ? ' Socialism in its splendid ideal appealed to my heart, while the economic soundness of its basis convinced my head All my life was turned towards the progress of the people, the helping of man, and it leaped forward to meet the stronger hope, the lofty ideal of social brotherhood, the rendering possible to all of freer life so long had I been striving thitherward, and here there opened up a path to the yearned-for goal ! How strong were the feelings surging in my heart may be seen in a brief extract from an article published second week of January 1885 " Christian charity ? We know its work It gives a hundred-weight of

coal and five pounds of beef once a year to a family whose head could earn a hundred such doles if Christian justice allowed him fair wage for the work he performs. It plunders the workers of the wealth they make, and then flings back at them a thousandth part of their own product as 'charity.' It builds hospitals for the poor whom it has poisoned in filthy courts and alleys, and workhouses for the worn-out creatures from whom it has wrung every energy, every hope, every joy. Miss Cobbe summons us to admire Christian civilisation, and we see idlers flaunting in the robes woven by the toilers, a glittering tinselled superstructure founded on the tears, the strugglings, the grey, hopeless misery of the poor."

This first month of January, 1885, brought on me the first attack for my Socialistic tendencies, from the pen of Mr. W. P. Ball, who wrote to the *Reformer* complaining of my paragraph, quoted above, in which I had advocated rate-supported meals for Board School children. A brief controversy thus arose, in which I supported my opinion, waiving the question as to my being "at heart a Socialist." In truth, I dreaded to make the plunge of publicly allying myself with the advocates of Socialism, because of the attitude of bitter hostility they had adopted towards Mr. Bradlaugh. On his strong, tenacious nature, nurtured on self-reliant individualism, the arguments of the younger generation made no impression. He could not change his methods because a new tendency was rising to the surface, and he did not see how different was the Socialism of our

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day to the Socialist dreams of the past—noble ideals of a future not immediately realisable in truth, but to be worked towards and rendered possible in the days to come. Could I take public action which might bring me into collision with the dearest of my friends, which might strain the strong and tender tie so long existing between us? My affection, my gratitude, all warred against the idea of working with those who wronged him so bitterly. But the cry of starving children was ever in my ears, the sobs of women poisoned in lead works, exhausted in nail works driven to prostitution by starvation, made old and haggard by ceaseless work. I saw their misery was the result of an evil system, was inseparable from private ownership of the instruments of wealth production that while the worker was himself but an instrument selling his labour under the law of supply and demand, he must remain helpless in the grip of the employing classes and that trade combinations could only mean increased warfare—necessary, indeed, for the time as weapons of defence—but meaning war, not brotherly co-operation of all for the good of all. A conflict which was stripped of all covering, a conflict between a personal tie and a call of duty could not last long, and with a heavy heart I made up my mind to profess Socialism openly and work for it with all my energy. Happily, Mr Bradlaugh was as tolerant as he was strong, and our private friendship remained unbroken but he never again felt the same confidence in my judgment as he felt before, nor did he any more consult me on his own

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policy, as he had done ever since we first clasped hands

A series of articles in *Our Corner* on the "Redistribution of Political Power," on the "Evolution of Society," on "Modern Socialism," made my position clear. "Over against those who laud the present state of Society, with its unjustly rich and its unjustly poor, with its palaces and its slums, its millionaires and its paupers, be it ours to proclaim that there is a higher ideal in life than that of being first in the race for wealth, most successful in the scramble for gold. Be it ours to declare steadfastly that health, comfort, leisure, culture, plenty for every individual are far more desirable than breathless struggle for existence, furious trampling down of the weak by the strong, huge fortunes accumulated out of the toil of others, to be handed down to those who had done nothing to earn them. Be it ours to maintain that the greatness of a nation depends not on the number of its great proprietors, on the wealth of its great capitalists, or the splendour of its great nobles, but on the absence of poverty among its people, on the education and refinement of its masses, on the universality of enjoyment in life. . . Enough for each of work, of leisure, of joy; too little for none, too much for none—such is the Social ideal. Better to strive after it worthily and fail, than to die without striving for it at all."

Then I differentiated the methods of the Socialist and the Radical Individualist, pleading for union among those who formed the wings of the army of Labour, and urging

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union of all workers against the idlers. For the weakness of the people has ever been in their divisions in the readiness of each section to turn its weapons against other sections instead of against the common foe. All privileged classes, when they are attacked sink their differences and present a serried front to their assailants. the people alone fight with each other, while the battle between themselves and the privileged is raging.

I strove as so many others were striving to sound in the ears of the thoughtless and the careless the cry of the sufferings of the poor endeavouring to make articulate their misery. Thus in a description of Edinburgh slums came the following "I saw in a 'house' which was made by boarding up part of a passage which had no window and in which it was necessary to burn an oil lamp all day, thus adding to the burden of the rent a family of three—man, wife, and child—whose lot was hardly of their own making' The man was tall and bronzed but he was dying of heart disease, he could not do hard work and he was too clumsy for light work, so he sat there after two days fruitless search, patiently nursing his miserable, scrofulous baby in his dim and narrow den. The cases of individual hopeless suffering are heartbreaking. In one room lay a dying child, dying of low fever brought on by want of food. 'It hae no faither, sobbed the mother and for a moment I did not catch the meaning that the father had left to the mother all the burden of a child unallowed by law. In another lay the corpse of a mother, with the children round

her, and hard-featured, gentle-hearted women came in to take back to their overcrowded beds 'the mitherless bairns.' In yet another a woman, shrunken and yellow, crouched over a glimmer of fire ; "I am dying of cancer of the womb," she said, with that pathetic resignation to the inevitable so common among the poor. I sat chatting for a few minutes. 'Come again, deary,' she said as I rose to go ; 'it's gey dull sitting here the day through.'"

The article in which these, among other descriptions, occurred was closed with the following : "Passing out of the slums into the streets of the town, only a few steps separating the horror and the beauty, I felt, with a vividness more intense than ever, the fearful contrasts between the lots of men ; and with more pressing urgency the question seemed to ring in my ears, 'Is there no remedy ? Must there always be rich and poor ?' Some say that it must be so ; that the palace and the slum will for ever exist as the light and the shadow. Not so do I believe. I believe that the poverty is the result of ignorance and of bad social arrangements, and that therefore it may be eradicated by knowledge and by social change. I admit that for many of these adult dwellers in the slums there is no hope. Poor victims of a civilisation that hides its brutality beneath a veneer of culture and of grace, for them individually there is, alas ! no salvation. But for their children, yes ! Healthy surroundings, good food, mental and physical training, plenty of play, and carefully chosen work—these might save the young and prepare them for happy life. But they



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are being left to grow up as their parents were, and even when a few hours of school are given them the home half-neutralises what the education effects. The scanty aid given is generally begrudged, the education is to be but elementary, as little as possible is doled out. Yet these children have each one of them hopes and fears, possibilities of virtue and of crime, a life to be made or marred. We shower money on generals and on nobles, we keep high-born paupers living on the national charity, we squander wealth with both hands on army and navy, on churches and palaces but we grudge every halfpenny that increases the education rate and howl down every proposal to build decent houses for the poor. We cover our heartlessness and indifference with fine phrases about sapping the independence of the poor and destroying their self-respect. With loathsome hypocrisy we repair a prince's palace for him, and let him live in it rent-free, without one word about the degradation involved in his thus living upon charity, while we refuse to 'pauperise' the toiler by erecting decent buildings in which he may live—not rent-free like the prince, but only paying a rent which shall cover the cost of erection and maintenance, instead of one which gives a yearly profit to a speculator. And so, year after year, the misery grows, and every great city has on its womb a cancer, sapping its vitality, poisoning its life-blood. Every great city is breeding in its slums a race which is reverting through the savage to the brute—a brute more dangerous in that degraded humanity has possibilities of evil in it

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beyond the reach of the mere wild beast. If not for Love's sake then for fear ; if not for justice or for human pity, than for sheer desire of self-preservation ; I appeal to the wise and to the wealthy to set their hands to the cure of social evil, ere stolidity gives place to passion and dull patience vanishes before fury, and they

“ ‘Learn at last, in some wild hour, how much the wretched dare.’ ”

Because it was less hotly antagonistic to the Radicals than the two other Socialist organisations, I joined the Fabian Society, and worked hard with it as a speaker and lecturer. Sidney Webb, G. Bernard Shaw, Hubert and Mrs. Bland, Graham Wallas—these were some of those who gave time, thought, incessant work to the popularising of Socialist thought, the spreading of sound economics, the effort to turn the workers' energy toward social rather than merely political reform. We lectured at workmen's clubs wherever we could gain a hearing, till we leavened London Radicalism with Socialist thought, and by treating the Radical as the unevolved Socialist rather than as the anti-Socialist, we gradually won him over to Socialist views. We circulated questions to be put to all candidates for parliamentary or other offices, stirred up interest in local elections, educated men and women into an understanding of the causes of their poverty, won recruits for the army of propagandists from the younger of the educated middle class. That the London working classes to-day are so largely Socialist is greatly due to the years of work done

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among them by members of the Fabian Society, as well to the splendid, if occasionally too militant energy of the Social Democratic Federation, and to the devotion of that noble and generous genius, William Morris

During this same year (1885) a movement was set on foot in England to draw attention to the terrible sufferings of the Russian political prisoners, and it was decided at a meeting held in my house to form a society of the friends of Russia, which should seek to spread accurate and careful information about the present condition of Russia. At that meeting were present Charles Bradlaugh, Stepniak, and many others, E. R. Pease acting as honorary secretary. It is noteworthy that some of the most prominent Russian exiles—such as Kropotkin—take the view that the Tzar himself is not allowed to know what occurs, and is very largely the victim of the bureaucracy that surrounds him.

Another matter, that increased as the months went on, was the attempt of the police authorities to stop Socialist speaking in the open air. Christians, Freethinkers, Salvationists, agitators of all kinds were for the most part, left alone but there was a regular crusade against the Socialists. Liberal and Tory journals alike condemned the way in which in Dod Street, in September, the Socialists' meetings were attacked. Quiet persistence was shown by the promoters—members of the Social Democratic Federation—and they were well supported by other Socialists and by the Radical clubs. I volunteered to speak on October 4th (my first Sunday in London after the summoning and

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imprisoning of the speakers had commenced), but the attitude of the people was so determined on the preceding Sunday that all interference was withdrawn.

Herbert Burrows stood for the School Board for the Tower Hamlets in the November of this year, and I find a paragraph in the *Reformer* in which I heartily wished him success, especially as the first candidate who had put forward a demand for industrial education. In this, as in so many practical proposals, Socialists have led the way. He polled 4,232 votes, despite the furious opposition of the clergy to him as a Freethinker, of the publicans to him as a teetotaler, of the maintainers of the present social system to him as a Socialist. And his fight did much to make possible my own success in 1888.

With this autumn, too, began, in connection with the struggle for the right of meeting, the helping of the workmen to fair trial by providing of bail and legal defence. The first case that I bailed out was that of Lewis Lyons, sent to gaol for two months with hard labour by Mr. Saunders, of the Thames Police Court. Oh, the weary, sickening waiting in the court for "my prisoner," the sordid vice, the revolting details of human depravity to which my unwilling eyes and ears were witnesses. I carried Lyons off in triumph, and the Middlesex magistrates quashed the conviction, the evidence being pronounced by them to be "confusing, contradictory, and worthless." Yet but for the chance of one of us stepping forward to offer bail and to provide the means for an appeal (I acted on

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Mr Bradlaugh's suggestion and advice, for he acted as counsellor to me all through the weary struggles that lasted till 1888, putting his great legal knowledge at my disposal, though he often disapproved my action, thinking me Quixotic)—but for this, Lewis Lyons would have had to suffer his heavy sentence

The general election took place this autumn, and Northampton returned Mr Bradlaugh for the fifth time, thus putting an end to the long struggle, for he took the oath and his seat in the following January, and at once gave notice of an Oaths Bill, to give to all who claimed it, under all circumstances the right to affirm. He was returned with the largest vote ever polled for him—4,315—and he entered Parliament with all the prestige of his great struggle, and went to the front at once, one of the recognised forces in the House. The action of Mr Speaker Peel promptly put an end to an attempted obstruction. Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Mr Cecil Raikes, and Sir John Hennaway had written to the Speaker asking his interference, but the Speaker declared that he had no authority, no right to stand between a duly elected member and the duty of taking the oath prescribed by statute. Thus ended the constitutional struggle of six years, that left the victor well-nigh bankrupt in health and in purse, and sent him to a comparatively early grave. He lived long enough to justify his election, to prove his value to the House and to his country, but he did not live long enough to render to England all the services which his long training,

his wide knowledge, his courage, and his honesty so eminently fitted him to yield.

*Our Corner* now served as a valuable aid in Socialist propaganda, and its monthly "Socialist Notes" became a record of Socialist progress in all lands. We were busy during the spring in organising a conference for the discussion of "The Present Commercial System, and the Better Utilisation of National Wealth for the Benefit of the Community," and this was successfully held at South Place Institute on June 9th, 10th, 11th, the three days being given respectively to the "Utilisation of Land," the "Utilisation of Capital," and the "Democratic Policy." On the 9th Mr. Bradlaugh spoke on the utilisation of waste lands, arguing that in a thickly populated country no one had the right to keep cultivable land uncultivated, and that where land was so kept there should be compulsory expropriation, the state taking the land and letting it out to cultivating tenants. Among the other speakers were Edward Carpenter, William Morris, Sidney Webb, John Robertson, William Saunders, W. Donisthorpe, Edward Aveling, Charlotte Wilson, Mrs. Fenwick Miller, Hubert Bland, Dr. Pankhurst, and myself—men and women of many views, met to compare methods, and so help on the cause of social regeneration.

Bitter attacks were made on me for my Socialist advocacy by some of the Radicals in the Freethought party, and looking back I find myself condemned as a "Saint Athanasius in petticoats," and as possessing a "mind like a milk-jug." This same courteous critic remarked, "I have heard

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Mrs Besant described as being, like most women, at the mercy of her last male acquaintance for her views on economics." I was foolish enough to break a lance in self-defence with this assailant, not having then learned that self-defence was a waste of time that might be better employed in doing work for others. I certainly should not now take the trouble to write such a paragraph as the following "The moment a man uses a woman's sex to discredit her arguments the thoughtful reader knows that he is unable to answer the arguments themselves. But really these silly sneers at woman's ability have lost their force, and are best met with a laugh at the stupendous 'male self-conceit' of the writer. I may add that such shafts are specially pointless against myself. A woman who thought her way out of Christianity and Whiggism into Freethought and Radicalism absolutely alone, who gave up every old friend, male and female, rather than resign the beliefs she had struggled to in solitude, who again, in embracing active Socialism has run counter to the views of her nearest 'male friends', such a woman may very likely go wrong, but I think she may venture, without conceit, to at least claim independence of judgment. I did not make the acquaintance of one of my present Socialist comrades, male or female, until I had embraced Socialism." A foolish paragraph, as are all self-defences, and a mischievous one, as all retort breeds fresh strife. But not yet had come the self-control that estimates the judgments of others at their true value, that reckes not of praise and blame, not yet

had I learned that evil should not be met with evil, wrath with wrath ; not yet were the words of the Buddha the law to which I strove to render obedience : " Hatred ceases not by hatred at any time ; hatred ceases by love." The year 1886 was a terrible one for labour, everywhere reductions of wages, everywhere increase of the numbers of the unemployed ; turning over the pages of *Our Corner*, I see " Socialist Notes " filled, month after month, with a monotonous tale, " there is a reduction of wages at " such and such a place ; so many " men have been discharged at ———, owing to the slackness of trade." Our hearts sank lower and lower as summer passed into autumn, and the coming winter threatened to add to starvation the bitter pains of cold. The agitation for the eight hours' day increased in strength as the unemployed grew more numerous week by week. " We can't stand it," a sturdy, quiet fellow had said to me during the preceding winter ; " flesh and blood can't stand it, and two months of this bitter cold, too." " We may as well starve idle as starve working," had said another, with a fierce laugh. And a spirit of sullen discontent was spreading everywhere, discontent that was wholly justified by facts. But ah ! how patient they were for the most part, how sadly, pathetically patient, this crucified Christ, Humanity ; wrongs that would set my heart and my tongue afire would be accepted as a matter of course. O blind and mighty people, how my heart went out to you ; trampled on, abused, derided, asking so little and needing so much ; so pathetically grateful for the



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pettiest services so loving and so loyal to those who offered you but their poor services and helpless love Deeper and deeper into my innermost nature ate the growing desire to succour to suffer for to save I had long given up my social reputation I now gave up with ever-increasing surrender ease comfort time the passion of pity grew stronger and stronger fed by each new sacrifice and each sacrifice led me nearer and nearer to the threshold of that gateway beyond which stretched a path of renunciation I had never dreamed of which those might tread who were ready wholly to strip off self for Man's sake who for Love's sake would surrender Love's return from those they served and would go out into the darkness for themselves that they might with their own souls as fuel feed the Light of the World

As the suffering deepened with the darkening months, the meetings of the unemployed grew in number and the murmurs of discontent became louder The Social Democratic Federation carried on an outdoor agitation not without making blunders being composed of human beings but with abundant courage and self sacrifice The policy of breaking up Socialist meetings went on while other meetings were winked at and John Williams a fiery speaker but a man with a record of pathetic struggle and patient heroism was imprisoned for two months for speaking in the open air and so nearly starved in gaol that he came out with his health broken for life

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1887 dawned, the year that was to close so stormily, and Socialists everywhere were busying themselves on behalf of the unemployed, urging vestries to provide remunerative work for those applying for relief, assailing the Local Government Board with practicable proposals for utilising the productive energies of the unemployed, circulating suggestions to municipalities and other local representative bodies, urging remedial measures. A four days' oral debate with Mr. Foote, and a written debate with Mr. Bradlaugh, occupied some of my energies, and helped in the process of education to which public opinion was being subjected. Both these debates were largely circulated as pamphlets. A series of afternoon debates between representative speakers was organised at South Place Institute, and Mr. Corrie Grant and myself had a lively discussion, I affirming "That the existence of classes who live upon unearned incomes is detrimental to the welfare of the community, and ought to be put an end to by legislation." Another debate—in this very quarrelsome spring of 1887—was a written one in the *National Reformer* between the Rev. G. F. Handel Rowe and myself on the proposition, "Is Atheism logically tenable, and is there a satisfactory Atheistic System for the guidance of Human Conduct." And so the months went on, and the menace of misery grew louder and louder, till in September I find myself writing: "This one thing is clear—Society must deal with the unemployed, or the unemployed will deal with Society. Stormier and stormier becomes the social outlook, and they

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at least are not the worst enemies of Society who seek to find some way through the breakers by which the ship of the Commonwealth may pass into quiet waters

Some amusement turned up in the shape of a Charing Cross Parliament in which we debated with much vigour the "burning questions" of the day. We organised a compact Socialist party defeated a Liberal Government took the reins of office and after a Queen's Speech in which her Majesty addressed her loyal Commons with a plainness of speech never before (or since) heard from the throne—we brought in several Bills of a decidedly heroic character. G. Bernard Shaw as President of the Local Government Board and I as Home Secretary came in for a good deal of criticism in connection with various drastic measures. An International Freethought Congress held in London, entailed fairly heavy work and the science classes were ever with us. Another written debate came with October, this time on the Teachings of Christianity making the fifth of these set discussions held by me during the year. This same month brought a change painful but just. I resigned my much-prized position as co-editor of the *National Reformer* and the number for October 23rd bore Charles Bradlaugh's name alone. The change did not affect my work on the paper, but I became merely a subordinate, though remaining, of course joint proprietor. The reason cannot be more accurately given than in the paragraph penned at the time. For a considerable time past, and lately in increasing number complaints have

reached me from various quarters of the inconvenience and uncertainty that result from the divided editorial policy of this paper on the question of Socialism. Some months ago I proposed to avoid this difficulty by resigning my share in the editorship ; but my colleague, with characteristic liberality, asked me to let the proposal stand over and see if matters would not adjust themselves. But the difficulty, instead of disappearing, has only become more pressing ; and we both feel that our readers have a right to demand that it be solved.

“ When I became co-editor of this paper I was not a Socialist ; and, although I regard Socialism as the necessary and logical outcome of the Radicalism which for so many years the *National Reformer* has taught, still, as in avowing myself a Socialist I have taken a distinct step, the partial separation of my policy in labour questions from that of my colleague has been of my own making, and not of his, and it is, therefore, for me to go away. Over by far the greater part of our sphere of action we are still substantially agreed, and are likely to remain so. But since, as Socialism becomes more and more a question of practical politics, differences of theory tend to produce differences in conduct ; and since a political paper must have a single editorial programme in practical politics, it would obviously be most inconvenient for me to retain my position as co-editor. I therefore resume my former position as contributor only, thus clearing the *National Reformer* of all responsibility for the views I hold.”

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To this Mr Bradlaugh added the following

" I need hardly add to this how very deeply I regret the necessity for Mrs Besant's resignation of the joint editorship of this Journal and the real grief I feel in accepting this break in a position in which she has rendered such enormous service to the Freethought and Radical cause As a most valued contributor I trust the *National Reformer* may never lose the efficient aid of her brain and pen For thirteen years this paper has been richer for good by the measure of her never-ceasing and most useful work I agree with her that a Journal must have a distinct editorial policy , and I think this distinctness the more necessary when as in the present case every contributor has the greatest freedom of expression I recognise in the fullest degree the spirit of self-sacrifice in which the lines to which I add these words, have been penned by Mrs Besant

— CHARLES BRADLAUGH

It was a wrench this breaking of a tie for which a heavy price had been paid thirteen years before but it was just Any one who makes a change with which pain is connected is bound in honour and duty, to take that pain as much as possible on himself he must not put his sacrifice on others nor pay his own ransom with their coin There must be honour kept in the life that reaches towards the Ideal, for broken faith to that is the only real infidelity

And there was another reason for the change that I dared not name to him, for his quick loyalty would then have made him stubbornly determined against change I

## ANNIE BESANT

saw the swift turning of public opinion, the gradual approach to him among Liberals who had hitherto held aloof, and I knew that they looked upon me as a clog and a burden, and that were I less prominently with him his way would be the easier to tread. So I slipped more and more into the background, no longer went with him to his meetings ; my use to him in public was over, for I had become hindrance instead of help. While he was outcast and hated I had the pride of standing at his side ; when all the fair-weather friends came buzzing round him I served him best by self-effacement, and I never loved him better than when I stood aside. But I continued all the literary work unaltered, and no change of opinions touched his kindness to me, although when, a little later, I joined the Theosophical Society, he lost his trust in my reasoning powers and judgment.

In this same month of October the unemployed began walking in procession through the streets, and harshness on the part of the police led to some rioting. Sir Charles Warren thought it his duty to dragoon London meetings after the fashion of Continental prefects, with the inevitable result that an ill-feeling grew up between the people and the police.

At last we formed a Socialist Defence Association, in order to help poor workmen brought up and sentenced on police evidence only, without any chance being given them of proper legal defence, and I organised a band of well-to-do men and women, who promised to obey a telegraphic

summons night or day and to bail out any prisoner arrested for exercising the ancient right of walking in procession and speaking. To take one instance Mr Burleigh the well-known war correspondent and Mr Winks were arrested and run in with Mr J Knight a workman for seditious language. I went down to the police-station to offer bail for the latter. Chief-Constable Howard accepted bail for Messrs Burleigh and Winks but refused it for Mr Knight. The next day at the police court the preposterous bail of £400 was demanded for Mr Knight and supplied by my faithful band and on the next hearing Mr Poland solicitor to the Treasury withdrew the charge against him for lack of evidence!

Then came the closing of Trafalgar Square and the unexpected and high-handed order that cost some men their lives many their liberty and hundreds the most serious injuries. The Metropolitan Radical Federation had called a meeting for November 13th to protest against the imprisonment of Mr O'Brien and as Mr Matthews from his place in the House had stated that there was no intention of interfering with *bona fide* political meetings the Radical clubs did not expect police interference. On November 9th Sir Charles Warren had issued an order forbidding all meetings in the Square but the clubs trusted the promise of the Home Secretary. On Saturday evening only, November 12th, when all arrangements were completed, did he issue a peremptory order, forbidding processions within a certain area. With this trap suddenly sprung upon

them, the delegates from the clubs, the Fabian Society, the Social Democratic Federation, and the Socialist League, met on that same Saturday evening to see to any details that had been possibly left unsettled. It was finally decided to go to the Square as arranged, and, if challenged by the police, to protest formally against the illegal interference, then to break up the processions and leave the members to find their own way to the Square. It was also decided to go Sunday after Sunday to the Square, until the right of public meetings was vindicated.

The procession I was in started from Clerkenwell Green, and walked with its banner in front, and the chosen speakers, including myself, immediately behind the flag. As we were moving slowly and quietly along one of the narrow streets debouching on Trafalgar Square, wondering whether we should be challenged, there was a sudden charge, and without a word the police were upon us with uplifted truncheons; the banner was struck down, and men and women were falling under a hail of blows. There was no attempt at resistance, the people were too much astounded at the unprepared attack. They scattered, leaving some of their number on the ground too much injured to move, and then made their way in twos and threes to the Square. It was garrisoned by police, drawn up in serried rows, that could only have been broken by a deliberate charge. Our orders were to attempt no violence, and we attempted none. Mr. Cunninghame Graham and Mr. John Burns, arm-in-arm, tried to pass through the



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police, and were savagely cut about the head and arrested. Then ensued a scene to be remembered, the horse police charged in squadrons at a hand-gallop, rolling men and women over like ninepins, while the foot police struck recklessly with their truncheons cutting a road through the crowd that closed immediately behind them. I got on a waggonette and tried to persuade the driver to pull his trap across one of the roads, and to get others in line, so as to break the charges of the mounted police, but he was afraid, and drove away to the Embankment so I jumped out and went back to the Square. At last a rattle of cavalry, and up came the Life Guards, cleverly handled but hurting none, trotting their horses gently and shouldering the crowd apart, and then the Scots Guards with bayonets fixed marched through and occupied the north of the Square. Then the people retreated as we passed round the word, 'Go home, go home'. The soldiers were ready to fire the people unarmed, it would have been but a massacre. Slowly the Square emptied and all was still. All other processions were treated as ours had been, and the injuries inflicted were terrible. Peaceable, law-abiding workmen, who had never dreamed of rioting, were left with broken legs, broken arms, wounds of every description. One man, Linnell, died almost immediately, others from the effect of their injuries. The next day a regular court-martial in Bow Street Police Court, witnesses kept out by the police, men dazed with their wounds, decent workmen of unblemished character who had never

been charged in a police-court before, sentenced to imprisonment without chance of defence. But a gallant band rallied to their rescue. William T. Stead, most chivalrous of journalists, opened a Defence Fund, and money rained in ; my pledged bail came up by the dozen, and we got the men out on appeal. By sheer audacity I got into the police-court, addressed the magistrate, too astounded by my profound courtesy and calm assurance to remember that I had no right there, and then produced bail after bail of the most undeniable character and respectability, which no magistrate could refuse. Breathing-time gained, a barrister, Mr. W. M. Thompson, worked day after day with hearty devotion, and took up the legal defence. Fines we paid, and here Mrs. Marx Aveling did eager service. A pretty regiment I led out of Millbank Prison, after paying their fines ; bruised, clothes torn, hatless, we must have looked a disreputable lot. We stopped and bought hats, to throw an air of respectability over our *cortège*, and we kept together until I saw the men into train and omnibus, lest, with the bitter feelings now roused, conflict should again arise. We formed the Law and Liberty League to defend all unjustly assailed by the police, and thus rescued many a man from prison ; and we gave poor Linnell, killed in Trafalgar Square, a public funeral. Sir Charles Warren forbade the passing of the hearse through any of the main thoroughfares west of Waterloo Bridge, so the processions waited there for it. W. T. Stead, R. Cunninghame Graham, Herbert Burrows, and myself

walked on one side the coffin William Morris, F Smith, R Dowling, and J Seddon on the other, the Rev Stewart D Headlam, the officiating clergyman, walked in front, fifty stewards carrying long wands guarded the coffin. From Wellington Street to Bow Cemetery the road was one mass of human beings who uncovered reverently as the slain man went by. At Aldgate the procession took three-quarters of an hour to pass one spot and thus we bore Linnell to his grave, symbol of a cruel wrong, the vast, orderly, silent crowd bareheaded making mute protest against the outrage wrought.

It is pleasant to put on record here Mr Bradlaugh's grave approval of the heavy work done in the police-courts, and the following paragraph shows how generously he could praise one not acting on his own lines. As I have on most serious matters of principle recently differed very widely from my brave and loyal co-worker and as a difference has been regrettably emphasised by her resignation of her editorial functions on this Journal, it is the more necessary that I should say how thoroughly I approve, and how grateful I am to her for her conduct in not only obtaining bail and providing legal assistance for the helpless unfortunates in the hands of the police but also for her daily personal attendance and wise conduct at the police-stations and police-courts, where she has done so much to abate harsh treatment on the one hand and rash folly on the other. While I should not have marked out this as fitting woman's work, especially in the recent very inclement

weather, I desire to record my view that it has been bravely done, well done, and most usefully done, and I wish to mark this the more emphatically as my views and those of Mrs. Besant seem wider apart than I could have deemed possible on many of the points of principle underlying what is every day growing into a most serious struggle." Ever did I find Charles Bradlaugh thus tolerant of difference of opinion, generously eager to approve what to him seemed right even in a policy he disapproved.

The indignation grew and grew ; the police were silently boycotted, but the people were so persistent and so tactful that no excuse for violence was given, until the strain on the police force began to tell, and the Tory Government felt that London was being hopelessly alienated ; so at last Sir Charles Warren fell, and a wiser hand was put at the helm.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THROUGH STORM TO PEACE

OUT of all this turmoil and stress rose a Brotherhood that had in it the promise of a fairer day. Mr. Stead and I had become close friends—he Christian, I Atheist, burning with one common love for man, one common hatred against oppression. And so in *Our Corner* for February, 1888, I wrote

“Lately there has been dawning on the minds of men far apart in questions of theology, the idea of founding a new Brotherhood, in which service of Man should take the place erstwhile given to service of God—a brotherhood in which work should be worship and love should be baptism, in which none should be regarded as alien who was willing to work for human good. One day as I was walking towards Millbank Gaol with the Rev. S. D. Headlam, on the way to liberate a prisoner, I said to him ‘Mr. Headlam, we ought to have a new Church, which should include all who have the common ground of faith in and love for man.’ And a little later I found that my friend Mr. W. T. Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, had long been

brooding over a similar thought, and wondering whether men 'might not be persuaded to be as earnest about making this world happy as they are over saving their souls.' The teaching of social duty, the upholding of social righteousness, the building up of a true commonwealth—such would be among the aims of the Church of the future. Is the hope too fair for realisation? Is the winning of such beatific vision yet once more the dream of the enthusiast? But surely the one fact that persons so deeply differing in theological creeds as those who have been toiling for the last three months to aid and relieve the oppressed, can work in absolute harmony side by side for the one end—surely this proves that there is a bond which is stronger than our antagonisms, a unity which is deeper than the speculative theories which divide."

How unconsciously I was marching towards the Theosophy which was to become the glory of my life, groping blindly in the darkness for that very brotherhood, definitely formulated on these very lines by those Elder Brothers of our race, at whose feet I was so soon to throw myself. How deeply this longing for something loftier than I had yet found had wrought itself into my life, how strong the conviction was growing that there was something to be sought to which the service of man was the road, may be seen in the following passage from the same article :

"It has been thought that in these days of factories and of tramways, of shoddy, and of adulteration, that all life must tread with even rhythm of measured footsteps,

## THROUGH STORM TO PEACE

and that the glory of the ideal could no longer glow over the greyness of a modern horizon. But signs are not a-wanting that the breath of the older heroism is beginning to stir men's breasts, and that the passion for justice and for liberty which thrilled through the veins of the world's greatest in the past, and woke our pulses to responsive throb, has not yet died wholly out of the hearts of men. Still the quest of the Holy Grail exercises its deathless fascination, but the seekers no longer raise eyes to heaven nor search over land and sea, for they know that it waits them in the suffering at their doors, that the consecration of the holiest is on the agonising masses of the poor and the despairing, the cup is crimson with the blood of the

• People the grey-grown speechless Christ

If there be a faith that can remove the mountains of ignorance and evil, it is surely that faith in the ultimate triumph of Right, in the final enthronement of Justice, which alone makes life worth the living, and which gems the blackest cloud of depression with the rainbow-coloured arch of an immortal hope.

As a step towards bringing about some such union of those ready to work for men, Mr Stead and I projected the *Link*, a halfpenny weekly, the spirit of which was described in its motto, taken from Victor Hugo: "The people are silence. I will be the advocate of the silence. I will speak for the dumb. I will speak of the small to the great and of the feeble to the strong. . . I will speak for all

the despairing silent ones. I will interpret this stammering ; I will interpret the grumbings, the murmurs, the tumults of crowds, the complaints ill-pronounced, and all these cries of beasts that, through ignorance and through suffering, man is forced to utter . . . I will be the Word of the People. I will be the bleeding mouth whence the gag is snatched out. I will say everything." It announced its object to be the " building up " of a " New Church, dedicated to the service of man," and " what we want to do is to establish in every village and in every street some man or woman who will sacrifice time and labour as systematically and as cheerfully in the temporal service of man as others do in what they believe to be the service of God." Week after week we issued our little paper, and it became a real light in the darkness. There the petty injustices inflicted on the poor found voice ; there the starvation wages paid to women found exposure ; there sweating was brought to public notice. A finisher of boots paid 2s. 6d. per dozen pairs and " find your own polish and thread " ; women working for  $10\frac{1}{2}$  hours per day, making shirts—" fancy best "—at from 10d. to 3s. per dozen, finding their own cotton and needles, paying for gas, towel, and tea (compulsory), earning from 4s. to 10s. per week for the most part ; a mantle finisher 2s. 2d. a week, out of which 6d. for materials ; " respectable hard-working woman " tried for attempted suicide, " driven to rid herself of life from want." Another part of our work was defending people from unjust landlords, exposing workhouse scandals, enforcing



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the Employers' Liability Act, Charles Bradlaugh's Truck Act, forming "Vigilance Circles" whose members kept watch in their own district over cases of cruelty to children, extortion in insanitary workshops, sweating, etc., reporting each case to me. Into this work came Herbert Burrows who had joined hands with me over the Trafalgar Square defence, and who wrote some noble articles in the *Link*. A man loving the people with passionate devotion, hating oppression and injustice with equal passion, working himself with remorseless energy, breaking his heart over wrongs he could not remedy. His whole character once came out in a sentence when he was lying delirious and thought himself dying: "Tell the people how I have loved them always."

In our crusade for the poor we worked for the dockers: "To-morrow morning, in London alone 20,000 to 25,000 adult men," wrote Sidney Webb, "will fight like savages for permission to labour in the docks for 4d. an hour, and one-third of them will fight in vain, and be turned workless away." We worked for children's dinners: "If we insist on these children being educated, is it not necessary that they shall be fed? If not, we waste on them knowledge they cannot assimilate, and torture many of them to death. Poor waifs of humanity, we drive them into the school and bid them learn, and the pitiful, wistful eyes question us why we inflict this strange new suffering, and bring into their dim lives this new pang. 'Why not leave us alone?' ask the pathetically patient little faces. Why not, indeed, since for these child martyrs of the slums, Society has only

formulas, not food." We cried out against "cheap goods," that meant "sweated and therefore stolen goods." "The ethics of buying should surely be simply enough. We want a particular thing, and we do not desire to obtain it either by begging or by robbery; but if in becoming possessed of it, we neither beg it nor steal, we must give for it something equivalent in exchange; so much of our neighbour's labour has been put into the thing we desire; if we will not yield him fair equivalent for that labour, yet take his article, we defraud him, and if we are not willing to give that fair equivalent we have no right to become the owners of his product."

This branch of our work led to a big fight—a fight most happy in its results. At a meeting of the Fabian Society, Miss Clementina Black gave a capital lecture on Female Labour, and urged the formation of a Consumers' League, pledged only to buy from shops certificated "clean" from unfair wage. H. H. Champion, in the discussion that followed, drew attention to the wages paid by Bryant & May (Limited), while paying an enormous dividend to their shareholders, so that the value of the original £5 shares was quoted at £18 7s. 6d. Herbert Burrows and I interviewed some of the girls, got lists of wages, of fines, etc. "A typical case is that of a girl of sixteen, a piece-worker; she earns 4s. a week, and lives with a sister, employed by the same firm, who 'earns good money, as much as 8s. or 9s. a week.' Out of the earnings 2s. a week is paid for the rent of one room. The child lives





MEMBERS OF THE MATCHMAKERS' UNION

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only on bread and butter and tea, alike for breakfast and dinner, but related with dancing eyes that once a month she went to a meal where 'you get coffee and bread and butter, and jam and marmalade, and lots of it.' We published the facts under the title of 'White Slavery in London,' and called for a boycott of Bryant & May's matches. "It is time some one came and helped us," said two pale-faced girls to me, and I asked "Who will help? Plenty of people wish well to any good cause, but very few care to exert themselves to help it, and still fewer will risk anything in its support. 'Some one ought to do it, but why should I?' is the ever re-echoed phrase of weak-kneed amiability. 'Some one ought to do it, so why not I?' is the cry of some earnest servant of man, eagerly forward springing to face some perilous duty. Between those two sentences lie whole centuries of moral evolution.

I was promptly threatened with an action for libel, but nothing came of it, it was easier to strike at the girls, and a few days later Fleet Street was enlivened by the irruption of a crowd of match-girls, demanding Annie Besant. I couldn't speechify to match-girls in Fleet Street, so asked that a deputation should come and explain what they wanted. Up came three women and told their story. They had been asked to sign a paper certifying that they were well treated and contented, and that my statements were untrue, they refused. "You had spoke up for us," explained one, "and we weren't going back on you. A girl, pitched on

as their leader, was threatened with dismissal ; she stood firm ; next day she was discharged for some trifle, and they all threw down their work, some 1,400 of them, and then a crowd of them started off to me to ask what to do next. If we ever worked in our lives, Herbert Burrows and I worked for the next fortnight. And a pretty hubbub we created ; we asked for money, and it came pouring in ; we registered the girls to receive strike pay, wrote articles, roused the clubs, held public meetings, got Mr. Bradlaugh to ask questions in Parliament, stirred up constituencies in which shareholders were members, till the whole country rang with the struggle. Mr. Frederick Charrington lent us a hall for registration, Mr. Sidney Webb and others moved the National Liberal Club to action ; we led a procession of the girls to the House of Commons, and interviewed, with a deputation of them, Members of Parliament who cross-questioned them. The girls behaved splendidly, stuck together, kept brave and bright all through. Mr. Hobart of the Social Democratic Federation, Messrs. Shaw, Bland, and Oliver, and Headlam of the Fabian Society, Miss Clementina Black, and many another helped in the heavy work. The London Trades Council finally consented to act as arbitrators and a satisfactory settlement was arrived at ; the girls went in to work, fines and deductions were abolished, better wages paid ; the Matchmakers' Union was established, still the strongest woman's Trades Union in England, and for years I acted as secretary, till, under press of other duties, I resigned, and

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my work was given by the girls to Mrs Thornton Smith ; Herbert Burrows became, and still is, the treasurer For a time there was friction between the Company and the Union, but it gradually disappeared under the influence of common sense on both sides, and we have found the manager ready to consider any just grievance and to endeavour to remove it, while the Company have been liberal supporters of the Working Women's Club at Bow, founded by H P Blavatsky.

The worst suffering of all was among the box-makers, thrown out of work by the strike, and they were hard to reach Twopence-farthing per gross of boxes, and buy your own string and paste, is not wealth, but when the work went more rapid starvation came Oh, those trudges through the lanes and alleys round Bethnal Green Junction late at night, when our day's work was over, children lying about on shavings, rags, anything, famine looking out of baby faces, out of women's eyes, out of the tremulous hands of men Heart grew sick and eyes dim, and ever louder sounded the question, "Where is the cure for sorrow, what the way of rescue for the world?"

In August I asked for a "match-girls' drawing-room" "It will want a piano, tables for papers, for games, for light literature, so that it may offer a bright, homelike refuge to these girls, who now have no real homes, no playground save the streets It is not proposed to build an 'institution' with stern and rigid discipline and enforcement of prim behaviour, but to open a home, filled with the genial

atmosphere of cordial comradeship, and self-respecting freedom—the atmosphere so familiar to all who have grown up in the blessed shelter of a happy home, so strange, alas ! to too many of our East London girls.” In the same month of August, two years later, H. P. Blavatsky opened such a home.

Then came a cry for help from South London, from tin-box makers, illegally fined, and in many cases grievously mutilated by the non-fencing of machinery ; then aid to shop assistants, also illegally fined ; legal defences by the score still continued ; a vigorous agitation for a free meal for children, and for fair wages to be paid by all public bodies ; work for the dockers and exposure of their wrongs ; a visit to the Cradley Heath chain-makers, speeches to them, writing for them ; a contest for the School Board for the Tower Hamlets division, and triumphant return at the head of the poll. Such were some of the ways in which the autumn days were spent, to say nothing of scores of lectures—Secularist, Labour, Socialist—and scores of articles written for the winning of daily bread. When the School Board work was added I felt that I had as much work as one woman's strength could do.

Thus was ushered in 1889, the to me never-to-be-forgotten year in which I found my way “ Home,” and had the priceless good fortune of meeting, and of becoming the pupil of, H. P. Blavatsky. Ever more and more had been growing on me the feeling that something more than I had was needed for the cure of social ills. The



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Socialist position sufficed on the economic side, but where to gain the inspiration, the motive, which should lead to the realisation of the Brotherhood of Man? Our efforts to really organise bands of unselfish workers had failed. Much indeed had been done, but there was not a real movement of self-sacrificing devotion, in which men worked for Love's sake only, and asked but to give, not to take. Where was the material for the nobler Social Order, where the hewn stones for the building of the Temple of Man? A great despair would oppress me as I sought for such a movement and found it not.

Not only so, but since 1886 there had been slowly growing up a conviction that my philosophy was not sufficient, that life and mind were other than, more than, I had dreamed. Psychology was advancing with rapid strides, hypnotic experiments were revealing unlooked-for complexities in human consciousness, strange riddles of multiplex personalities, and, most startling of all, vivid intensities of mental action when the brain, that should be the generator of thought, was reduced to a comatose state. Fact after fact came hurtling in upon me, demanding explanation I was incompetent to give. I studied the obscurer sides of consciousness, dreams, hallucinations, illusions, insanity. Into the darkness shot a ray of light—A. P. Sinnett's "Occult World," with its wonderfully suggestive letters expounding not the supernatural but a nature under law, wider than I had dared to conceive. I added Spiritualism to my studies, experimenting privately,

finding the phenomena indubitable, but the spiritualistic explanation of them incredible. The phenomena of clairvoyance, clairsaudience, thought-reading, were found to be real. Under all the rush of the outer life, already sketched, these questions were working in my mind, their answers were being diligently sought. I read a variety of books, but could find little in them that satisfied me. I experimented in various ways suggested in them, and got some (to me) curious results. I finally convinced myself that there was some hidden thing, some hidden power, and resolved to seek until I found, and by the early spring of 1889 I had grown desperately determined to find at all hazards what I sought. At last, sitting alone in deep thought as I had become accustomed to do after the sun had set, filled with an intense but nearly hopeless longing to solve the riddle of life and mind, I heard a Voice that was later to become to me the holiest sound on earth, bidding me take courage for the light was near. A fortnight passed, and then Mr. Stead gave into my hands two large volumes. "Can you review these? My young men all fight shy of them, but you are quite mad enough on these subjects to make something of them." I took the books; they were the two volumes of "The Secret Doctrine," written by H. P. Blavatsky.

Home I carried my burden, and sat me down to read. As I turned over page after page the interest became absorbing; but how familiar it seemed; how my mind leapt forward to presage the conclusions, how natural



ANNIE BESANT IN 1889

I am immersed in Mrs Blavatsky ! If I persevere in the attempt to review her, you must write on my tomb, "She has gone to investigate the Secret Doctrine at first hand."



## THROUGH STORM TO PEACE

it was how coherent how subtle and yet how intelligible I was dazzled blinded by the light in which disjointed facts were seen as parts of a mighty whole, and all my puzzles, riddles problems seemed to disappear. The effect was partially illusory in one sense in that they all had to be slowly unravelled later the brain gradually assimilating that which the swift intuition had grasped as truth. But the light had been seen and in that flash of illumination I knew that the weary search was over and the very Truth was found.

I wrote the review and asked Mr. Stead for an introduction to the writer and then sent a note asking to be allowed to call. I received the most cordial of notes, bidding me come and in the soft spring evening Herbert Burrows and I—for his aspirations were as mine on this matter—walked from Notting Hill Station wondering what we should meet to the door of 17 Lansdowne Road. A pause a swift passing through hall and outer room, through folding-doors thrown back a figure in a large chair before a table a voice vibrant compelling. My dear Mrs. Besant I have so long wished to see you and I was standing with my hand in her firm grip and looking for the first time in this life straight into the eyes of H. P. B. I was conscious of a sudden leaping forth of my heart—was it recognition?—and then I am ashamed to say, a fierce rebellion, a fierce withdrawal, as of some wild animal when it feels a mastering hand. I sat down after some introductions that conveyed no ideas to me, and listened. She talked of travels, of various

countries, easy brilliant talk, her eyes veiled, her exquisitely moulded fingers rolling cigarettes incessantly. Nothing special to record, no word of Occultism, nothing mysterious, a woman of the world chatting with her evening visitors. We rose to go, and for a moment the veil lifted, and two brilliant, piercing eyes met mine, and with a yearning throb in the voice : " Oh, my dear Mrs. Besant, if you would only come among us ! " I felt a well-nigh uncontrollable desire to bend down and kiss her, under the compulsion of that yearning voice, those compelling eyes, but with a flash of the old unbending pride and an inward jeer at my own folly, I said a commonplace polite good-bye, and turned away with some inanely courteous and evasive remark. " Child," she said to me long afterwards, " your pride is terrible ; you are as proud as Lucifer himself." But truly I think I never showed it to her again after that first evening, though it sprang up wrathfully in her defence many and many a time, until I learned the pettiness and the worthlessness of all criticism, and knew that the blind were objects of compassion not of scorn.

Once again I went, and asked about the Theosophical Society, wishful to join, but fighting against it. For I saw, distinct and clear—with painful distinctness, indeed—what that joining would mean. I had largely conquered public prejudice against me by my work on the London School Board, and a smoother road stretched before me, whereon effort to help should be praised not blamed. Was I to plunge into a new vortex of strife, and make

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myself a mark for ridicule—worse than hatred—and fight again the weary fight for an unpopular truth? Must I turn against Materialism, and face the shame of publicly confessing that I had been wrong, misled by intellect to ignore the Soul? Must I leave the army that had battled for me so bravely the friends who through all brutality of social ostracism had held me dear and true? And he, the strongest and truest friend of all whose confidence I had shaken by my Socialism—must he suffer the pang of seeing his co-worker, his co-fighter, of whom he had been so proud, to whom he had been so generous, go over to the opposing hosts and leave the ranks of Materialism? What would be the look in Charles Bradlaugh's eyes when I told him that I had become a Theosophist? The struggle was sharp and keen, but with none of the anguish of old days in it, for the soldier had now fought many fights and was hardened by many wounds. And so it came to pass that I went again to Lansdowne Road to ask about the Theosophical Society. H. P. Blavatsky looked at me piercingly for a moment. "Have you read the report about me of the Society for Psychical Research?" "No, I never heard of it, so far as I know." "Go and read it, and if, after reading it, you come back—well." And nothing more would she say on the subject but branched off to her experiences in many lands.

I borrowed a copy of the Report, read and re-read it. Quickly I saw how slender was the foundation on which the imposing structure was built. The continual assumptions on

which conclusions were based ; the incredible character of the allegations ; and—most damning fact of all—the foul source from which the evidence was derived. Everything turned on the veracity of the Coulombs, and they were self-stamped as partners in the alleged frauds. Could I put such against the frank, fearless nature that I had caught a glimpse of, against the proud fiery truthfulness that shone at me from the clear, blue eyes, honest and fearless as those of a noble child ? Was the writer of “ The Secret Doctrine ” this miserable impostor, this accomplice of tricksters, this foul and loathsome deceiver, this conjuror with trap-doors and sliding panels ? I laughed aloud at the absurdity and flung the Report aside with the righteous scorn of an honest nature that knew its own kin when it met them, and shrank from the foulness and baseness of a lie. The next day saw me at the Theosophical Publishing Company’s office at 7, Duke Street, Adelphi, where Countess Wachtmeister—one of the least of H. P. B.’s friends—was at work, and I signed an application to be admitted as fellow of the Theosophical Society.

On receiving my diploma I betook myself to Lansdowne Road, where I found H. P. B. alone. I went over to her, bent down and kissed her, but said no word. “ You have joined the Society ? ” “ Yes.” “ You have read the report ? ” “ Yes.” “ Well ? ” I knelt down before her and clasped her hands in mine, looking straight into her eyes. “ My answer is, will you accept me as your pupil, and give me the honour of proclaiming you my



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teacher in the face of the world? " Her stern, set face softened, the unwonted gleam of tears sprang to her eyes, then with a dignity more than regal, she placed her hand upon my head " You are a noble woman May Master bless you

From that day, the 10th of May, 1889, until now—two years three and half months after she left her body, on May 8, 1891—my faith in her has never wavered, my trust in her has never been shaken I gave her my faith on an imperious intuition I proved her true day after day in closest intimacy living by her side, and I speak of her with the reverence due from a pupil to a teacher who never failed her, with the passionate gratitude which, in our School, is the natural meed of the one who opens the gateway and points out the path " Folly! fanaticism! " scoffs the Englishman of the nineteenth century Be it so I have seen, and I can wait

I have been told that I plunged headlong into Theosophy and let my enthusiasm carry me away I think the charge is true, in so far as the decision was swiftly taken, but it had been long led up to, and realised the dreams of childhood on the higher planes of intellectual womanhood And let me here say that more than all I hoped for in that first plunge has been realised, and a certainty of knowledge has been gained on doctrines seen as true as that swift flash of illumination I know, by personal experiment, that the Soul exists, and that my Soul, not my body, is myself, that it can leave the body at will,

that it can, disembodied, reach and learn from living human teachers, and bring back and impress on the physical brain that which it has learned ; that this process of transferring consciousness from one range of being, as it were, to another, is a very slow process, during which the body and brain are gradually correlated with the subtler form which is essentially that of the Soul, and that my own experience of it, still so imperfect, so fragmentary, when compared with the experience of the highly trained, is like the first struggles of a child learning to speak compared with the perfect oratory of the practised speaker ; that consciousness, so far from being dependent on the brain, is more active when freed from the gross forms of matter than when encased within them ; that the great Sages spoken of by H. P. Blavatsky exist ; that they wield powers and possess knowledge before which our control of Nature and knowledge of her ways is but as child's play. All this, and much more, have I learned, and I am but a pupil of low grade, as it were in the infant class of the Occult School ; so the first plunge has been successful, and the intuition has been justified. This same path of knowledge that I am treading is open to all others who will pay the toll demanded at the gateway—and that toll is willingness to renounce everything for the sake of spiritual truth, and willingness to give all the truth that is won to the service of man, keeping back no shred for self.

On June 23rd, in a review of “ The Secret Doctrine ” in the *National Reformer*, the following passages occur.

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and show how swiftly some of the main points of the teaching had been grasped (There is a blunder in the statement that of the seven modifications of Matter Science knows only four, and till lately knew only three, these four are sub-states only, sub-divisions of the lowest plane )

After saying that the nineteenth-century Englishman would be but too likely to be repelled if he only skimmed the book, I went on, "With telescope and with microscope, with scalpel and with battery, Western Science interrogates nature, adding fact to fact, storing experience after experience, but coming ever to gulfs unfathomable by its plummets, to heights unscalable by its ladders. Wide and masterful in its answers to the 'How?', the 'Why?' ever eludes it, and causes remain enwrapped in gloom. Eastern Science uses as its scientific instrument the penetrating faculties of the mind alone, and regarding the material plane as *Maya*—illusion— seeks in the mental and spiritual planes of being the causes of the material effects. There, too, is the only reality, there the true existence of which the visible universe is but the shadow

"It is clear that from such investigations some further mental equipment is necessary than that normally afforded by the human body. And here comes the parting of the ways between East and West. For the study of the material universe, our five senses, aided by the instruments invented by Science, may suffice. For all we can hear and see, taste and handle, these accustomed servitors, though often blundering, are the best available guides to

knowledge. But it lies in the nature of the case that they are useless when the investigation is to be into modes of existence which cannot impress themselves on our nerve-ends. For instance, what we know as colour is the vibration frequency of etheric waves striking on the retina of the eye, between certain definite limits—759 trillions of blows from the maximum, 436 trillions from the minimum—these waves give rise in us to the sensation which the brain translates into colour. (Why the 436 trillion blows at one end of a nerve become ‘Red’ at the other end we do not know ; we chronicle the fact but cannot explain it.) But our capacity to respond to the vibration cannot limit the vibrational capacity of the ether ; to us the higher and lower rates of vibration do not exist, but if our sense of vision were more sensitive we should see where now we are blind. Following this line of thought we realise that matter may exist in forms unknown to us, in modifications to which our senses are unable to respond. Now steps in the Eastern Sage and says : ‘ That which you say *may* be, *is* ; we have developed and cultivated senses as much superior to yours as your eye is superior to that of the jelly-fish ; we have evolved mental and spiritual faculties which enable us to investigate on the higher planes of being with as much certainty as you are investigating on the physical plane ; there is nothing *supernatural* in the business, any more than your knowledge is supernatural, though much above that accessible to the fish ; we do not speculate on these higher forms of existence ; we *know* them by

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personal study, just as you know the fauna and flora of your world. The powers we possess are not supernatural, they are latent in every human being, and will be evolved as the race progresses. All that we have done is to evolve them more rapidly than our neighbours, by a procedure as open to you as it was to us. Matter is everywhere, but it exists in seven modifications of which you only know four, and until lately only knew three, in those higher forms reside the causes of which you see the effects in the lower, and to know these causes you must develop the capacity to take cognisance of the higher planes.'

Then followed a brief outline of the cycle of evolution, and I went on "What part does man play in this vast drama of a universe? Needless to say, he is not the only living form in a Cosmos, which for the most part is uninhabitable by him. As Science has shown living forms everywhere on the material plane, races in each drop of water, life throbbing in every leaf and blade, so the 'Secret Doctrine' points to living forms on higher planes of existence, each suited to its environment, till all space thrills with life, and nowhere is there death, but only change. Amid these myriads are some evolving towards humanity, some evolving away from humanity as we know it, divesting themselves of its grosser parts. For man is regarded as a sevenfold being, four of these parts belonging to the animal body, and perishing at, or soon after, death, while three form his higher self, his true

individuality, and these persist and are immortal. These form the Ego, and it is this which passes through many incarnations, learning life's lesson as it goes, working out its own redemption within the limits of an inexorable law, sowing seeds of which it ever reaps the harvest, building its own fate with tireless fingers, and finding nowhere in the measureless time and space around it any that can lift for it one weight it has created, one burden it has gathered, unravel for it one tangle it has twisted, close for it one gulf it has dugged."

Then after noting the approaches of Western Science to Eastern, came the final words: "It is of curious interest to note how some of the latest theories seem to catch glimpses of the Occult Doctrines, as though Science were standing on the very threshold of knowledge which shall make all her past seem small. Already her hand is trembling towards the grasp of forces beside which all those now at her command are insignificant. How soon will her grip fasten on them? Let us hope not until social order has been transformed, lest they should only give more to those who have, and leave the wretched still wretcheder by force of contrast. Knowledge used by selfishness widens the gulf that divides man from man and race from race, and we may well shrink from the idea of new powers in Nature being yoked to the car of Greed. Hence the wisdom of those 'Masters,' in whose name Madame Blavatsky speaks, has ever denied the knowledge which is power until Love's lesson has been learned, and has given only into the hands

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of the selfless the control of those natural forces which, misused, would wreck society '

This review, and the public announcement, demanded by honesty, that I had joined the Theosophical Society, naturally raised somewhat of a storm of criticism, and the *National Reformer* of June 30th contained the following

The review of Madame Blavatsky's book in the last *National Reformer*, and an announcement in the *Star*, have brought me several letters on the subject of Theosophy I am asked for an explanation as to what Theosophy is, and as to my own opinion on Theosophy—the word 'theosoph' is old, and was used among the Neo-platonists From the dictionary its new meaning appears to be, 'one who claims to have knowledge of God, or of the laws of nature, by means of internal illumination An Atheist certainly cannot be a Theosophist A Deist might be a Theosophist A Monist cannot be a Theosophist Theosophy must at least involve Dualism Modern Theosophy, according to Madame Blavatsky as set out in last week's issue, asserts much that I do not believe and alleges some things that, to me, are certainly not true I have not had the opportunity of reading Madame Blavatsky's two volumes, but I have read during the past ten years many publications from the pen of herself, Colonel Olcott, and of other Theosophists They appear to me to have sought to rehabilitate a kind of Spiritualism in Eastern phraseology I think many of their allegations utterly erroneous, and their reasonings wholly unsound I very

deeply regret indeed that my colleague and co-worker has, with somewhat of suddenness, and without any interchange of ideas with myself, adopted as facts matters which seem to me to be as unreal as it is possible for any fiction to be. My regret is greater as I know Mrs. Besant's devotion to any course she believes to be true. I know that she will always be earnest in the advocacy of any views she undertakes to defend, and I look to possible developments of her Theosophic views with the very gravest misgiving. The editorial policy of this paper is unchanged, and is directly antagonistic to all forms of Theosophy. I would have preferred on this subject to have held my peace, for the public disagreeing with Mrs. Besant on her adoption of Socialism has caused pain to both ; but on reading her article and taking the public announcement made of her having joined the Theosophical organisation, I owe it to those who look to me for guidance to say this with clearness.

“ CHARLES BRADLAUGH.”

“ It is not possible for me here to state fully my reasons for joining the Theosophical Society, the three objects of which are : To found a Universal Brotherhood without distinction of race or creed ; to forward the study of Aryan literature and philosophy ; to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the physical powers latent in man. On matters of religious opinion the members are absolutely free. The founders of the society deny a personal God, and a somewhat subtle form of Pantheism is



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taught as the Theosophic view of the universe though even this is not forced on members of the society I have no desire to hide the fact that this form of Pantheism appears to me to promise solution of some problems, especially problems in psychology, which Atheism leaves untouched.

“ANNIE BESANT”

Theosophy, as its students well know, so far from involving Dualism, is based on the One, which becomes Two on manifestation, just as Atheism posits one existence, only cognisable in the duality force and matter, and as philosophic—though not popular—Theism teaches one Deity whereof are spirit and matter. Mr Bradlaugh's temperate disapproval was not copied in its temperance by some other Freethought leaders, and Mr Foote especially distinguished himself by the bitterness of his attacks. In the midst of the whirl I was called away to Paris to attend, with Herbert Burrows, the great Labour Congress held there from July 15th to July 20th, and spent a day or two at Fontainebleau with H P Blavatsky, who had gone abroad for a few weeks' rest. There I found her translating the wonderful fragments from “The Book of the Golden Precepts,” now so widely known under the name of “The Voice of the Silence.” She wrote it swiftly, without any material copy before her, and in the evening made me read it aloud to see if the “English was decent.” Herbert Burrows was there, and Mrs. Candler, a staunch American Theosophist, and we sat round H P B while I read. The translation was in perfect and beautiful

English, flowing and musical ; only a word or two could we find to alter, and she looked at us like a started child, wondering at our praises—praises that any one with the literary sense would endorse if they read that exquisite prose poem.

A little earlier in the same day I had asked her as to the agencies at work in producing the taps so constantly heard at Spiritualistic Séances. “ You don’t use spirits to produce taps,” she said ; “ see here.” She put her hand over my head, not touching it, and I heard and felt slight taps on the bone of my skull, each sending a little electric thrill down the spine. She then carefully explained how such taps were producible at any point desired by the operator, and how interplay of the currents to which they were due might be caused otherwise than by conscious human volition. It was in this fashion that she would illustrate her verbal teachings, proving by experiment the statements made as to the existence of subtle forces controllable by the trained mind. The phenomena all belonged to the scientific side of her teaching, and she never committed the folly of claiming authority for her philosophic doctrines on the ground that she was a wonder-worker. And constantly she would remind us that there was no such thing as “ miracle ” ; that all the phenomena she had produced were worked by virtue of a knowledge of nature deeper than that of average people, and by the force of a well-trained mind and will ; some of them were what she would describe as “ psychological tricks,” the creation of

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images by force of imagination, and in pressing them on others as a "collective hallucination", others, such as the moving of solid articles, either by an astral hand projected to draw them towards her, or by using an Elemental, others by reading in the Astral Light, and so on. But the proof of the reality of her mission from those whom she spoke of as Masters lay not in these comparatively trivial physical and mental phenomena, but in the splendour of her heroic endurance, the depth of her knowledge, the selflessness of her character, the lofty spirituality of her teaching, the untiring passion of her devotion, the incessant ardour of her work for the enlightening of men. It was these, and not her phenomena, that won for her our faith and confidence—we who lived beside her, knowing her daily life—and we gratefully accepted her teaching not because she claimed any authority, but because it woke in us powers, the possibility of which in ourselves we had not dreamed of, energies of the Soul that demonstrated their own existence.

Returning to London from Paris, it became necessary to make a very clear and definite presentment of my change of views, and in the *Reformer* of August 4th I find the following "Many statements are being made just now about me and my beliefs, some of which are absurdly, and some of which are maliciously, untrue. I must ask my friends not to give credence to them. It would not be fair to my friend Mr Bradlaugh to ask him to open the columns of this Journal to an exposition of

Theosophy from my pen, and so bring about a long controversy on a subject which would not interest the majority of the readers of the *National Reformer*. This being so I cannot here answer the attacks made on me. I feel, however, that the party with which I have worked for so long has a right to demand of me some explanation of the step I have taken, and I am therefore preparing a pamphlet dealing fully with the question. Further, I have arranged with Mr. R. O. Smith to take as subject of the lectures to be delivered by me at the Hall of Science on August 4th and 11th 'Why I became a Theosophist.' Meanwhile I think that my years of service in the ranks of the Free-thought party give me the right to ask that I should not be condemned unheard, and I even venture to suggest, in view of the praises bestowed on me by Freethinkers in the past, that it is possible that there may be something to be said, from the intellectual standpoint, in favour of Theosophy. The caricatures of it which have appeared from some Freethinkers' pens represent it about as accurately as the Christian Evidence caricatures of Atheism represent that dignified philosophy of life ; and, remembering how much they are themselves misrepresented, I ask them to wait before they judge."

The lectures were delivered, and were condensed into a pamphlet bearing the same title, which has had a very great circulation. It closed as follows :

" There remains a great stumblingblock in the minds of many Freethinkers which is certain to prejudice them

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against Theosophy, and which offers to opponents a cheap subject for sarcasm—the assertion that there exist other living beings than the men and animals found on our own globe. It may be well for people who at once turn away when such an assertion is made to stop and ask themselves whether they really and seriously believe that throughout this mighty universe, in which our little planet is but as a tiny speck of sand in the Sahara, this one planet only is inhabited by living things? Is all the universe dumb save for our voices? eyeless save for our vision? dead save for our life? Such a preposterous belief was well enough in the days when Christianity regarded our world as the centre of the universe the human race as the one for which the Creator had deigned to die. But now that we are placed in our proper position, one among countless myriads of worlds, what ground is there for the preposterous conceit which arrogates as ours all sentient existence? Earth, air, water, all are teeming with living things suited to their environment, our globe is overflowing with life. But the moment we pass in thought beyond our atmosphere everything is to be changed. Neither reason nor analogy support such a supposition. It was one of Bruno's crimes that he dared to teach that other worlds than ours were inhabited but he was wiser than the monks who burned him. All the Theosophists aver is that each phase of matter has living things suited to it, and that all the universe is pulsing with life. 'Superstition!' shriek the bigoted. It is no more superstition than the belief in

Bacteria, or in any other living thing invisible to the ordinary human eye. 'Spirit' is a misleading word, for, historically, it connotes immateriality and a supernatural kind of existence, and the Theosophist believes neither in the one nor the other. With him all living things act in and through a material basis, and 'matter' and 'spirit' are not found dissociated. But he alleges that matter exists in states other than those at present known to science. To deny this is to be about as sensible as was the Hindû prince who denied the existence of ice because water, in his experience, never became solid. Refusal to believe until proof is given is a rational position ; denial of all outside of our own limited experience is absurd.

" One last word to my Secularist friends. If you say to me, ' Leave our ranks, ' I will leave them ; I force myself on no party, and the moment I feel myself unwelcome I will go.<sup>1</sup> It has cost me pain enough and to spare to admit that the Materialism from which I hoped all has failed me, and by such admission to bring on myself the disapproval of some of my nearest friends. But here, as at other times in my life, I dare not purchase peace with a lie. An imperious necessity forces me to speak the truth, as I see it, whether the speech please or displease, whether it bring praise or blame. That one loyalty to Truth I must keep stainless, whatever friendships fail me or human ties be broken. She may lead me into the wilderness, yet I must

<sup>1</sup> I leave these words as they were written in 1889. I resigned my office in the N.S.S. in 1890, feeling that the N.S.S. was so identified with Materialism that it had no longer place for me.

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follow her , she may strip me of all love, yet I must pursue her , though she slay me, yet will I trust in her , and I ask no other epitaph on my tomb but

· SHE TRIED TO FOLLOW TRUTH

Meanwhile, with this new controversy on my hands, the School Board work went on, rendered possible, I ought to say, by the generous assistance of friends unknown to me, who sent me £150 a year during the last year and a half. So also went on the vigorous Socialist work, and the continual championship of struggling labour movements, prominent here being the organisation of the South London fur-pullers into a union, and the aiding of the movement for shortening the hours of tram and 'bus men, the meetings for which had to be held after midnight. The feeding and clothing of children also occupied much time and attention, for the little ones in my district were, thousands of them, desperately poor. My studies I pursued as best I could, reading in railway carriages, tramcars, omnibuses, and stealing hours for listening to H P B by shortening the nights.

In October, Mr Bradlaugh's shaken strength received its death-blow, though he was to live yet another fifteen months. He collapsed suddenly under a most severe attack of congestion and lay in imminent peril, devotedly nursed by his only remaining child, Mrs Bonner, his elder daughter having died the preceding autumn. Slowly he struggled back to life, after four weeks in bed, and, ordered by his physician to take rest and if possible a sea voyage, he

sailed for India on November 28th, to attend the National Congress, where he was enthusiastically acclaimed as "Member for India."

In November I argued a libel suit, brought by me against the Rev. Mr. Hoskyns, vicar of Stepney, who had selected some vile passages from a book which was not mine and had circulated them as representing my views, during the School Board election of 1888. I had against me the Solicitor-General, Sir Edward Clarke, at the bar, and Baron Huddleston on the bench; both counsel and judge did their best to browbeat me and to use the coarsest language, endeavouring to prove that by advocating the limitation of the family I had condemned chastity as a crime. Five hours of brutal cross-examination left my denial of such teachings unshaken, and even the pleadings of the judge for the clergyman, defending his parishioners against an unbeliever and his laying down as law that the statement was privileged, did not avail to win a verdict. The jury disagreed, not, as one of them told me afterwards, on the question of the libel, but on some feeling that a clergyman ought not to be mulcted in damages for his over-zeal in defence of his faith against the ravening wolf of unbelief, while others, regarding the libel as a very cruel one, would not agree to a verdict that did not carry substantial damages. I did not carry the case to a new trial, feeling that it was not worth while to waste time over it further, my innocence of the charge itself having been fully proved.



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But the months rolled on, and early in the year 1890 H. P. Blavatsky had given to her £1,000, to use in her discretion for human service, and if she thought well, in the service of women. After a good deal of discussion she fixed on the establishment of a club in East London for working girls, and with her approval Miss Laura Cooper and I hunted for a suitable place. Finally we fixed on a very large and old house 193 Bow Road, and some months went in its complete renovation and the building of a hall attached to it. On August 15th it was opened by Madame Blavatsky and dedicated by her to the brightening of the lot of hardworking and underpaid girls. It has nobly fulfilled its mission for the last three years. Very tender was H. P. B.'s heart to human suffering, especially to that of women and children. She was very poor towards the end of her earthly life, having spent all on her mission, and refusing to take time from her Theosophical work to write for the Russian papers which were ready to pay highly for her pen. But her slender purse was swiftly emptied when any human pain that money could relieve came in her way. One day I wrote a letter to a comrade that was shown to her, about some little children to whom I had carried a quantity of country flowers, and I had spoken of their faces pinched with want. The following characteristic note came to me:

"MY DEAREST FRIEND—I have just read your letter to—and my heart is sick for the poor little ones! Look here, I have but 30s. of my own money of which

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I can dispose (for as you know I am a pauper, and proud of it), but I want you to take them and *not say a word*. This may buy thirty dinners for thirty poor little starving wretches, and I may feel happier for thirty minutes at the thought. Now don't say a word, and do it; take them to those unfortunate babies who loved your flowers and felt happy. Forgive your old uncouth friend, *useless* in this world!

“ Ever yours,

“ H. P. B.”

It was this tenderness of hers that led us, after she had gone, to found the “ H. P. B. Home for little children,” and one day we hope to fulfil her expressed desire that a large but homelike Refuge for outcast children should be opened under the auspices of the Theosophical Society.

The lease of 17, Landsdowne Road expiring in the early summer of 1890, it was decided that 19, Avenue Road should be turned into the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Europe. A hall was built for the meetings of the Blavatsky Lodge—the lodge founded by her—and various alterations made. In July her staff of workers was united under one roof; thither came Archibald and Bertram Keightley, who had devoted themselves to her service years before, and the Countess Wachtmeister, who had thrown aside all the luxuries of wealth and of high social rank to give all to the cause she served and the friend she loved with deep and faithful loyalty; and George Mead, her secretary and earnest disciple, a man of strong brain and strong character, a fine scholar and untiring worker; thither,

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too, Claude Wright, most lovable of Irishmen, with keen insight underlying a bright and sunny nature, careless on the surface, and Walter Old, dreamy and sensitive, a born psychic, and, like many such, easily swayed by those around him, Emily Kinslingbury also, a studious and earnest woman, Isabel Cooper Oakley, intuitional and studious, a rare combination and a most devoted pupil in Occult studies, James Pryse, an American, than whom none is more devoted, bringing practical knowledge to the help of the work, and making possible the large development of our printing department. These, with myself, were at first the resident staff, Miss Cooper and Herbert Burrows, who were also identified with the work being prevented by other obligations from living always as part of the household.

The rules of the house were—and are—very simple, but H P B insisted on great regularity of life, we breakfasted at 8 a.m., worked till lunch at 1, then again till dinner at 7. After dinner the outer work for the Society was put aside, and we gathered in H P B's room where we would sit talking over plans, receiving instructions, listening to her explanation of knotty points. By 12 midnight all the lights had to be extinguished. My public work took me away for many hours, unfortunately for myself, but such was the regular run of our busy lives. She herself wrote incessantly, always suffering, but of indomitable will, she drove her body through its tasks, merciless to its weaknesses and its pains. Her pupils she treated very variously, adapting herself with nicest accuracy to their differing

natures ; as a teacher she was marvellously patient, explaining a thing over and over again in different fashions, until sometimes after prolonged failure she would throw herself back in her chair : " My God ! " (the easy " Mon Dieu " of the foreigner) " am I a fool that you can't understand ? Here, So-and-so "—to some one on whose countenance a faint gleam of comprehension was discernible—" tell these flapdoodles of the ages what I mean." With vanity, conceit, pretence of knowledge, she was merciless if the pupil were a promising one ; keen shafts of irony would pierce the sham. With some she would get very angry, lashing them out of their lethargy with fiery scorn ; and in truth she made herself a mere instrument for the training of her pupils, careless what they, or any one else thought of her, providing that the resulting benefit to them was secured. And we, who lived around her, who in closest intimacy watched her day after day, we bear witness to the unselfish beauty of her life, the nobility of her character, and we lay at her feet our most reverent gratitude for knowledge gained, lives purified, strength developed. O noble and heroic Soul, whom the outside-purblind world misjudges, but whom your pupils partly saw, never through lives and deaths shall we repay the debt of gratitude we owe to you.

And thus I came through storm to peace, not to the peace of an untroubled sea of outer life, which no strong soul can crave, but to an inner peace that outer troubles may not avail to ruffle—a peace which belongs to the

## THROUGH STORM TO PEACE

eternal not to the transitory, to the depths not to the shallows of life. It carried me scatheless through the terrible spring of 1891, when death struck down Charles Bradlaugh in the plenitude of his usefulness, and unlocked the gateway into rest for H. P. Blavatsky. Through anxieties and responsibilities heavy and numerous it has borne me, every strain makes it stronger, every trial makes it serener, every assault leaves it more radiant. Quiet confidence has taken the place of doubt, a strong security the place of anxious dread. In life, through death, to life, I am but the servant of the great Brotherhood, and those on whose heads but for a moment the touch of the Master has rested in blessing can never again look upon the world save through eyes made luminous with the radiance of the Eternal Peace.

PEACE TO ALL BEINGS



BOOK III



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES





## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

1889

Old Diary Leaves    Fourth Series    By H S O'cott

### FIRST MEETING OF ANNIE BESANT AND H S OLCOTT

H P B greeted me warmly on my arrival in London on 4th September. I found Mrs Annie Besant living in the house, having just come over from the Secularists into our camp, with bag and baggage. This was when her subsequent splendid career as Theosophical lecturer, author, editor, and teacher began, does it not seem strange that she should have ever been anything else than a Theosophist? What I found in her is written in my Diary of 5th September, the evening of our first meeting. Mrs Besant I find to be a natural Theosophist her adhesion to us was inevitable, from the attractions of her nature towards the mystical. *She is the most important gain to us since Sinnett*    "

When conducting her to the door I looked into her kind, grand eyes, and all this sense of her character passed like a flash into my own consciousness. I recollect taking

her then by the hand and saying, just at parting : “ I think you will find yourself happier than you have ever been in your life before, for I see you are a mystic and have been frozen into your brain environment. You come now into a family of thinkers who will know you as you are and love you dearly.” On the next Sunday evening I went to hear Mrs. Besant on “ Memory,” at the Hall of Science—a very able and forcible discourse, the first I ever heard from her. So favourable a chance to hear so grand an orator was not to be lost, so I went alone or with others several times to her lectures, and escorted her to the Hall of Science on that memorable evening when she pathetically bade farewell to her Freethinker colleagues, since they had decided that she ought not to be longer allowed to work with them, because she had taken up views so diametrically opposed to theirs.

1890

In the year 1890 Mrs. Besant first met Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, at Mr. A. P. Sinnett’s house, in London.

1891

*Old Diary Leaves.* Fourth Series.

## THE FIRST CONVENTION IN EUROPE

The meeting was held in the hall of the Blava Lodge, in Avenue Road . . . Mrs. Besant bade me

welcome in words so sweet, so characteristic of her own loving temperament, that I cannot refrain from quoting them here. She said

‘ It is at once my duty and privilege, as President of the B’lavatsky Lodge the largest in the British dominions to voice the welcome of the Delegates and members of this Convention to the President-Founder. It is not necessary for me to remind you of the past services he has rendered to the cause to which his life has been dedicated. Chosen by the Masters as President for life of The Theosophical Society, associated with their messenger H. P. B., bound together by every tie that binds, no words we can utter, no thought we can think, can add anything to the loyalty which every member must feel to our President. We welcome him with added warmth because of the promptitude with which, on receiving the notice of H. P. B.’s departure, he has come from Australia, where he had gone to recover the health lost in the service of the cause. He came across the ocean without delay, in order that by his presence he might strengthen and encourage us here in Europe, that every one may go promptly forward in the work. And in bidding you, Mr. President, welcome to this Convention, we can assure you of our steadfast loyalty to the cause, you who are the only one who represents the mission from the Masters themselves. We are met here to-day to carry on the work of H. P. B., and the only way to carry on her work and to strengthen The Society will be by loyalty and faithfulness to the cause for which she died, the only cause worth living for and dying for in the world.’

1892

*Supplement to "The Theosophist," December, 1892.*

TO INDIAN THEOSOPHISTS,

19, Avenue Road, London, N.W.,

*October 21st, 1892*

Dear Friends and Brothers,

I am told that much disappointment is felt because I cannot yet visit India, and as India is to me, as to every Theosophist, the "Sacred Land," I earnestly desire that no harsher feeling may mingle with that of friendly regret.

Last year I promised to visit India, if possible, but there were two conditions necessary of fulfilment: (1) that my health would bear the climate; (2) that—as I live on what I earn, and use my earnings for the support of the Head-quarters left in my charge and that of others by H. P. B.—enough money should be raised in India to cover the cost of the tour, and to pay towards the maintenance of Head-quarters that which I should have paid out of my earnings, if I were working in Europe or America. Neither of these conditions was fulfilled. The physician who attended H. P. B. while she lived in London, stated positively that if I went to India and lectured as I proposed, I should not return alive; and that overstrained by the trouble of that year and the heavy work that fell on me, my strength would not bear the hot climate and the complete change of life-conditions; that, while I might get all right again working in England or in America—the latter being specially advisable because of the sea-voyage and bracing climate



ANNIE BESANT IN 1892 WEARING THE RING OF H. P. BLAVATSKY



## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

—a lecturing tour in India must mean a hopeless breakdown. Apart from all else, this opinion was enough to delay my visit.

But the second condition remained unfulfilled. Some hasty members have spoken of breach of contract on my side in my not visiting India this year. I made no promise to do so. I promised to go last year if certain conditions were fulfilled, one of which depended on members of the Society. The members did not fulfil this condition so the arrangement lapsed and since this I have made no promise, and therefore can commit no breach of contract.

I am told that now money enough has been raised to cover the out of pocket expenses of the tour. It is for those who subscribed it to decide if it shall lie in the Bank to await my visit or shall be returned to those who gave it. On that I can say nothing.

India has the great good fortune of having in its midst Colonel H. S. Olcott, the President-Founder, it has also as its General Secretary Brother Bertram Keightley, a beloved friend and pupil of H. P. B., to these has been added Brother Edge, spared from our staff here because India's need was greater than ours. Whether while it has all these, it has a visit from me a year or two sooner or later is a matter of small moment. India's salvation depends on herself and her resident workers, not on the passing excitement that might be caused by lectures from me, and you, my Brothers, are responsible for your own land. Ere long I hope to stand face to face with you, I to whom India and the Indian peoples seem nearer than the nation.

to which by birth I belong. In heart I am one with you, and to you by my past I belong. Born last time under Western skies for work that needs to be done, I do not forget my true motherland, and my inner nature turns eastward ever with filial longing. When Karma opens the door I will walk through it, and we will meet in body as we can already meet in mind. Farewell.

ANNIE BESANT, F.T.S.

1893

*Old Diary Leaves.* Fifth Series.

As the World's Parliament of Religions was to meet at Chicago in the following September. . . . I deputed the Vice-President, Mr. Judge, to represent me officially, and appointed Mrs. Besant special delegate to speak there on behalf of the whole Society. Theosophy was presented most thoroughly both before the whole Parliament, an audience of 3,000 people, and at meetings of our own for the holding of which special halls were kindly given us. A profound impression was created by the discourses of Professor G. N. Chakravarti and Mrs. Besant, who is said to have risen to unusual heights of eloquence, so exhilarating were the influences of the gathering.

I reached Colombo on the 30th of October, and from that time onward had my hands full with a variety of business . . . arranging with the Buddhists for the reception of Mrs. Besant and for her lectures, and explaining who Mrs. Besant was and what had been her public services. She and Countess Wachtmeister arrived





Sincerely  
*Annie Besant*

ANNIE BESANT IN 1893 WEARING H P B RING



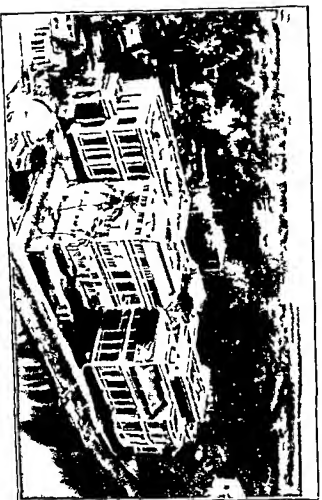
on the 9th of November, late in the evening From 2 to 8 p.m. a thousand people, including 200 of our boy pupils and 125 girls, had waited patiently for them and then dispersed They landed at about 9 o'clock in the morning At 2 p.m. we took train for Kandy We were escorted from the station to our lodgings by a great torchlight procession and the whole Buddhist population lined the streets At 8.30 p.m. Mrs Besant lectured in the Town Hall on the subject of "The World's Great Needs" The large audience was deeply impressed and excited to enthusiasm by her eloquence, frankness of speech, and sympathy for the views and aspirations of the Sinhalese people We returned to Colombo the next day and Mrs Besant lectured in the evening at the Public Hall to a packed audience There was great disappointment because of the impossibility of her giving a second lecture With these two lectures the great Indian tour of Mrs Besant, 1893-4, was inaugurated and the success which crowned them was but a foretaste of that which followed her throughout

If my friend, Mr Alan Leo, or any other astrologer, chooses to test his science by comparing his calculations with the results of the Indian tour thus commenced, I may tell them that Mrs Besant put her foot on Indian soil for the first time at the hour of 10.24 a.m. on 16th November, 1893 The aspect of the heavens, however their calculations may come out, must have been very auspicious, for success followed her throughout her whole journey in India On arrival at Tuticorin we were met by a deputation of Hindu friends with an address of welcome to

Mrs. Besant and the usual gifts of flowers. A crowd gathering, she was induced to make an impromptu address on the platform at the railway station before the train left for Tinnevely. . . . Our rooms were crowded with visitors throughout the day but Mrs. Besant took some time for herself to dispose of a large amount of accumulated correspondence. In the evening she lectured splendidly on the great subject of "Life after Death," to a very large audience.

*Bangalore.* Warned by the size of her audiences, which not even the largest hall in Bangalore could accommodate, the Committee arranged for Mrs. Besant to speak out of doors the next morning. She spoke from a platform just large enough to accommodate us two, and as the weather was fine a great concourse of people attended. The scene was so picturesque that the Committee had it photographed and a copy can be seen by visitors to Adyar.

*Bezwada.* Bezwada is a small place and it was rather amusing after the monster audiences which we had faced hitherto, to see Mrs. Besant giving a magnificent lecture on the subject of "Pilgrimages of the Soul," in a lawyer's office to an auditory numbering about seventy-five people. . . . We continued our journey, going by paddle-boat through two locks and across the Krishna river to what was then the Terminus of the East Coast Railway. We reached home, Adyar, on the morning of the 20th December. Many friends met us at the station with handsome garlands and Adyar looked so charming that it is no wonder that it provoked the admiration of the ladies.



ADYAR THEOSOPHICAL HEADQUARTERS



At the Convention held in December 1893 Mrs Besant gave a course of four lectures on The Building of the Cosmos. Delegates arrived by battalions all the rooms in the house were crowded and Mrs Besant's daily conversations were attended by large gatherings. She would sit on the floor cross legged in Hindu fashion along with others on great carpets that I had had spread and answer the hardest questions with a readiness and lucidity that was charming.

1894

On New Year's Day 1894 at 4.30 p.m. Mrs Besant lectured in the open air from a temporary platform on the Esplanade Madras to some six thousand people on India. It was a most eloquent address and immensely applauded.

On Sunday the 7th with Mrs Besant Countess C W and Bhavani I sailed for Calcutta in the P and O steamer Peshawar. We reached Calcutta January 10th at 6 p.m. when it was dark. From 8 to 10 next morning and in the afternoon Mrs Besant received visitors and in the evening lectured to an audience of 5,000 on India's Place Among the Nations.

I was much interested with the testimony of three persons who came to me separately and told me what they had seen and felt during the speaker's lecture. The first one said that he had heard a tinkling of silvery bells and smelt a peculiarly delicious perfume like a combination of oriental spices which had seemed to flow from her and fill the hall. The

second had seen about her a bright and shining light ; the third had not only seen this but in that radiance the figure of a majestic, bearded and turbaned Personage, whose aura seemed to blend with that of the speaker in vibrations each one of which sent a thrill through her nervous system.

*Benares.* On arrival at Benares we were driven to the large house of that generous friend, Babu Kally Kissen Tagore. In the afternoon the Society held a special meeting at which Mrs. Besant was presented with a richly illuminated Address contained in an engraved Benares brass cylinder. In the evening she went with some friends for a sail on the Ganges by moonlight. She, with the Countess Wachtmeister, Bhavani, Upendranath and myself, went to visit H. P. B.'s old acquaintance of 1879, "Majji," the Yogini who lived for many years, and until her death, at an ashram of her own on the bank of the Ganges.

*Agra.* On arriving at Agra, on the 7th February, much behind time because of the crowding of the road with extra traffic connected with the transport of pilgrims to and from the great Mela at Allahabad, we were cordially received by my old friend, Lala Baijanat, a most earnest, scholarly and independent man . . . who entertained us most hospitably. . . . On the next day the ladies saw for the first time, that architectural wonder of the world, the Taj Mahal. . . . When we walked down the avenue and came to the mausoleum, the Countess and I noticed that Mrs. Besant seemed oppressed by a sense of sadness ; she looked listlessly but with mournful eyes, at the marble pile. When we asked her the reason for her



sadness she said that she was almost overcome with the sense of the bloodshed that had occurred in past times in and around the fort, whose towering embattled walls stood before us on the other side of the river, and then behind all the beauty of this peerless building she felt the wretchedness and almost heard the groans of the poor coolies by whose enforced labour it had been built.

Lahore Mrs. Besant lectured to an audience of five thousand people. It says much for the penetrating quality of her voice that it reached the outermost circle of hearers. In conversation with her one would never think such a thing possible, for she speaks usually in a low sweet tone sometimes so low as to be heard with difficulty by a person somewhat deaf.

Bareilly Mrs. Besant gave a lecture on *Man and His Destiny*, so magnificent that in my Diary I call it "a Kohinoor among diamonds." Let the reader fancy what an intellectual banquet I enjoyed throughout this whole tour with this divinely gifted speaker.

Bombay, 15th March The memorable tour of 1893-4 was now drawing to a close but I was glad to see that our dear friend was showing but little sign of physical exhaustion, as for her mentality, that, of course, became brighter and brighter as her wonder-working brain was exercised. We were only in Bombay for a day as we were booked to be in Surat the next morning, but we were not left idle. Mrs. Besant lectured in the Novelty Theatre, to a crowded house on "The Insufficiency of Materialism." A host of reporters were present, none of whom gave a fair idea of her discourse.

*Bombay, 20th March.* As the hours of her stay in India became numbered she was increasingly pestered with requests for interviews, often to answer questions of minor importance. Her good nature was such that she did her best to gratify all, but there is a limit to all human endurance, and so some had to be refused. We went to her steamer with her luggage and arranged with the Chief Steward about facilities for her servant's cooking her Hindu food for her. . . . We then drove to the palatial family residence of the late Morarji Goculdas, where Mrs. Besant was garlanded and a costly sari of silk was placed around her shoulders; we then drove to the Docks and she embarked on the S. S. "Peninsular," (for Europe), attended by a throng of warm friends who expressed their sorrow at her departure. . . . At 5 p.m. the ship sailed and bore away dear Annie Besant and with her the heart of all India.

*The Theosophist, July, 1928. "Twenty Years' Work."*

Mrs. Besant arrived in Australia on August 26th, 1894.

At Melbourne the general election happened to be in full swing, and actors and actresses were playing to empty benches, nevertheless hundreds were nightly turned away from the doors of the Bijou Theatre where Annie Besant delivered her first four lectures. So great was the interest that a second four had to be delivered at the Athenaeum. At Sydney her welcome from the Australian public was even more enthusiastic. The Opera House was nightly packed to overflowing, and Mrs. Besant wrote :

"The Society is making steady progress here, and is harmonious and united."

On October 1st she sailed for New Zealand, where she received a similar cordial and appreciative welcome, visiting Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin and Wellington. She writes

‘ I rather hope that the general orthodox feeling may be a little softened by one incident of my visit the Bishop of Auckland and his daughter called on me at the Theosophic rooms. By the way, if you see a paragraph that I attended the cathedral service and took the sacrament, it is not true! But the statement was all over Auckland. I was at a meeting at the time, but that does not matter. It will do, with the Ganges bathing and the visit to the Roman Catholic authorities on my joining the Roman Catholic Church, to prove how variable are my religious opinions.

On December 22nd Mrs Besant arrived in Madras for the Convention. In a remarkable speech she submitted to the General Council the resolution that Mr W Q Judge, who had been causing disharmony in America during the year, should be asked to resign. Of this speech the Colonel wrote

“ I think when the next biography of Annie Besant is compiled, this speech, so full of kindly compassion, so free from even a tinge of malice, or even of that righteous indignation which is permissible to an innocent person, whose character has been traduced without cause, should be brought into notice ’

1895

On her return to England, Mrs Besant lectured at St James's Hall, London, April 27th, 1895, on “ The

Mahatmas as Facts and Ideals," Mr. Sinnett presiding and giving a short preliminary address : the lecture was issued in pamphlet form to all members of The Society. . . .

The Fifth Annual Convention of The Theosophical Society was a stormy one, and Mr. Judge's adherents left the Convention after an excited protest.

Mrs. Besant gave a series of lectures on Sundays in St. James's Hall on "Karma," which were published in Manual IV. In this there is evident an increased development of astral and mental sight. Unlike the former Manuals, it is the result of personal observation and not derived from H. P. B.'s teachings. She visited Holland for the second time, and during August gave a very notable series of lectures to the Blavatsky Lodge entitled "The Outer Court."

Mrs. Besant proposed visiting India in October, but delayed doing so, though at very great inconvenience and serious pecuniary loss. She writes :

"H. P. B., Col. Olcott and myself are now the persons assailed. . . . It is best I should remain at hand to deal with any specific accusations that may be made. The plan adopted by the enemies of the Society of gathering together accusations against prominent members, keeping careful silence while the members are at hand, and launching the accusations publicly when they are at the other side of the world, or on the eve of departure, is not a very chivalrous or honourable one ; but we must take people as we find them. . . . So I have unpacked my boxes and settled down again to work here. I am grieved to think of the disappointment that will be caused in India by the

cancelling of the arrangements. However, it is all one work, whether in India or in England, and the duty of the faithful servant is to be where the greatest stress happens to be at the moment. For myself, I may say—as I see in many papers that I am going to leave or have left the Theosophical Society—that since I joined the Society in 1889, I have never had a moment's regret for having entered it, nay, that each year of membership has brought an ever-increasing joy. I do not expect to find perfection either in the outer Founders of the Theosophical Society or in its members, any more than they find it in myself, and I can bear with their errors as I hope they can bear with mine. But I can also feel gratitude to Col Olcott for his twenty years of brave and loyal service, and to H P B for the giant's work she did against materialism, to say nothing of the personal debt to her that I can never repay. Acceptance of the gift she poured out so freely binds to her in changeless love and thankfulness all loyal souls she served, and the gratitude I owe her grows as I know more and more the value of the knowledge and the opportunities to which she opened the way. Regret indeed there is for those who turn aside, terrified by shadows, and so lose in this life the happiness they might have had, but for them also shall the light dawn in the future, and to them also shall other opportunities come."

[The Convention time was near and on December 23rd Mrs Besant and others arrived (at Adyar) from Bombay. In the evening Mrs Besant held one of her splendid conversaziones in the great hall, as usual charming her auditors with her replies to questions and explanations of

difficult subjects. . . . I do not know when I have been more interested than in her descriptions of the experience of watching the dream life of sleeping persons—the magical creations of the wandering imagination, the reproduction of actual experiences during the waking state, and the instantaneous transformations caused by the rush of thought and the impulse of sensations.—*Old Diary Leaves*, Fifth Series.]

1896

On New Year's Day 1896. Mrs. Besant, with Mr. Keightley and Babu Upendranath, left for Poona, where she had a lecturing engagement.

At Calcutta on 28th January Mrs. Besant gave a splendid lecture on "Vivisection" in the Town Hall, which awakened great enthusiasm, especially among the Jains who are, as is well known, the foremost opponents of cruelty to animals. An enormous audience filled the building to overflowing. . . . Mrs. Besant was giving lectures and holding conversation meetings daily, to the great edification of the Hindu public. Her final lecture, on "Education," was given on the 1st of February, and an hour later I put her in the train for Benares.

At the beginning of the year the first instalment of *Man and His Bodies* appeared in *Lucifer*.

On April 4th Mrs. Besant left India for Europe.

In April Mrs. Besant began, in the small Queen's Hall, London, a series of lectures intended to give a general scheme of Theosophy. These were published under the title, *The Ancient Wisdom*.

In July she presided at the Sixth Convention of the European Section which was held in London in August continued her lecturing in England and in September she went to Holland From Amsterdam she left for India

On September 28th she arrived in Bombay and after a crowded lecture and many interviews she went straight to Benares for the Convention of the Indian Section The week before the Convention she wrote

Durga Puja is a family festival something like Christmas only—Hindus fast instead of feast at their religious ceremonies A good deal of money is usually spent over it but Babu Upendranath and his family this year set the example of using the money for the relief of the suffering caused by the high prices of food brought about by the coming famine They bought many wagonloads of wheat and opened a shop in the courtyard where it was sold considerably below market price thus aiding the industrious who are on the verge of starvation from the raised prices

The Convention went well and much useful work was done one thing being the utilising of the organisation of the Theosophical Society to aid in the relief of the starving The rains have failed over the whole of India and the harvest is lost Such a famine has never been before the food supply cannot last over the winter and how three hundred millions of people can be fed by imported supplies is the problem to be faced A catastrophe on a huge scale is feared

From Benares Mrs Besant and Upendranath Basu started in November on a lecture tour in the Punjab and Sindh From Multan she writes

“I explained to the people how Theosophy gave them the key to their own teachings, showing them how it illuminated many passages and symbols of whose meaning they knew nothing. . . . To-morrow we go to Sindh, quite unbroken ground.”

From Hyderabad, Sindh, she writes :

“This letter is penned under difficulties, a crowd of women are gazing through the windows and flowing over the threshold, a number of aged men are seated round the room, a pundit is eagerly arguing in Sindhi with a priest of Guru Nânak, and I have refused to answer questions on Paramâtman and Âtman on the ground that I have closed my reception and must do my English mail. This is a curious place, the people good-hearted and gentle-natured, very ignorant and very eager to learn, quite untrained in thought, not even conversant with the teachings of their own religion. . . . When we left Multan for Hyderabad, we travelled all day through the arid tract that lies beyond the fertilising influence of the Indus. There is no famine here, for the country is supplied by its great river and has no rains. . . . The first day's lecture at Hyderabad was attended by a crowd that swept away all the arrangements made to receive about one-fiftieth of their number. I had to stand on a table and address a densely packed standing audience, that remained quiet as mice, but must have been very uncomfortable. On the three following days we had a big awning spread and I spoke from a verandâh. Every morning's conversazione has been crowded and the people very earnest, but oh ! so ignorant. I got some of the more hopeful together and formed them into a centre for



study, but advised them not to join the T S until they knew a little more. They have bought quantities of books, clearing out our whole stock. I have had one large meeting of women also, they being as eager as the men.

From Hyderabad Mrs Besant went to Karachi, then she turned southward, and at Bangalore in Mysore lectured on 'Theosophy, the Science of the Soul' which so impressed the Prime Minister, who presided at the meeting, that he requested that an abstract be printed and circulated by the Government the lecture dealing mainly with education.

She proceeded to Adyar for the Annual Convention of the T S. This Convention of 1896 equalled if it did not surpass, either of its predecessors in point of harmony and enthusiasm. There was an unusually large attendance of members. Mrs Besant's morning lectures on Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christianity were the ablest, most scholarly and eclectic she has ever given. An Indian sovereign Prince and the Mysore Dewan attended the lectures.

### 1897

Mrs Besant's long and stormy journey of nearly five weeks from India to America via England was completed on March 18th, when she arrived in New York.

Mrs Besant with Countess Wachtmeister and Miss A J Willson proceeded westward to St Louis. Miss Willson writes

"In New York we had heard of floods along the valley of the Mississippi, and as we advanced towards

St. Louis, which is at the junction of the Mississippi and the Missouri, more and more flooded ground and traces of recent heavy rains could be observed from the railway. The papers had been full of the panic caused by the rising of the river, and from this and other causes, we had received a telegram that no lecture could be given at St. Louis ; so we passed on to Kansas City. Here a new Lodge was formed. At Topeka we were told that we were the first members of the Theosophical Society who had visited this pleasant little place with a Lodge of a dozen members. The Library Hall was filled with a superior audience. At Denver the crowd of enquirers increased, until they overflowed the hall, and quite a strong Lodge was formed of thirty-two members, one of whom volunteered to find a room for use as a Theosophical Reading Room and centre for enquiry. At Colorado Springs all, at first, seemed cold in regard to Theosophy, but before we left a group of eleven had formed themselves into a Lodge. Once more we boarded the train and climbed across the Rocky Mountains, with their grand and vivid scenery, and descended through the desert on to the well-watered, snow-mountain encircled plain on which stands Salt Lake City. From many causes this centre of Mormon religion seemed unlikely for Theosophical ideas to take root and the audiences were small, but once more we found people sufficiently interested to form a Lodge for study, So too at Ogden. Thus far we leave behind an unbroken chain of Lodges in all the towns visited.

“ Then round the head of Great Salt Lake, across the desert and over the Sierra Nevada, down the full length of

California to San Diego, beautifully situated on its land-locked bay, not far from the frontiers of Mexico. In the evening the *drawing-room* of the hotel was filled two and three times in succession by the crowds who flocked to see Mrs Besant. Amongst them were a few old members and it was pleasant to see them expand into a wider understanding of the aims and objects of The Theosophical Society as they listened. They had an opportunity of asking some of the questions which had puzzled them, and they finally united with the new members to form a Lodge. At Los Angeles a reception was given to Mrs Besant and the Countess by Harmony Lodge, which 200 or 300 people attended. After six days work, the little party left for San Francisco, where lectures, classes, conversations, a reception at which 300 people were presented to Mrs Besant, and a celebration of White Lotus Day, were interspersed with Lodge meetings and talks to members. Here we had the pleasure of meeting Mr Marques, whose observations on the human aura have lately been brought to the notice of the public. On one day five meetings were addressed by Mrs Besant, for by some misapprehension a public announcement had been made of a lecture which she had refused for want of time, and she would not disappoint those who might come. Visits were made also to Alameda, Oakland and Stanford University, San Francisco, then on to San Jose Santa Cruz, Sacramento, on to Portland, Oregon, to Tacoma on Puget Sound, with its fir and cedar-clad hills guarded by isolated snow-capped peaks. At Olympia the Governor of the State attended the lecture.

“ In beautifully situated and pure-aired Seattle we found a strong branch and much hopeful work progressing. This is one of the many Branches which owe their origin to the tireless energy of the Countess. It was only started last summer, but already has its lecture room and library, and over fifty members. . . . Spokane distinguished itself by flocking in such crowds to the first lecture that some hundreds had to be turned away. Butte, Montana, came next, a desert of hills honey-combed by mines of copper, silver, iron and gold. Anaconda and Helena, two other mining towns, were visited. At the latter place the Unitarian minister gave up his lecture in the midst of a series and advertised Mrs. Besant's instead. On June 15th we found ourselves in Sheridan, Wyoming, near the house of Buffalo Bill and some of his Wild-West riders. Here we encountered a different type of men from the miners of Montana, cowboys. It was cheering that the young Branch had already thirty members. A few more members joined, and we hope that some of the scattered ranchers carried back to their homes ideas to work into their daily lives. At Lincoln, Nebraska, the Universalist Church was packed both on Sunday and Monday ; and a study class was formed. At Omaha a prominent Woman's Club held a reception in Mrs. Besant's honour, and lectures in the Opera House commanded fair audiences, somewhat thinned by the heat which drove all who could to leave the town for the country.

“ At the Chicago Convention many delegates were gathered, and other Sections were represented by delegates, letters or telegrams of greeting. Mrs. Besant,

after a sketch of the work in India and Europe, spoke of the new literature, which is of such value to the usefulness of The Theosophical Society and laid stress on the duty of members to perfect themselves in a knowledge of the fundamental teachings of Theosophy that they may be ready to give help to those who enquire 'No movement that is ignorant can live she said, 'and no movement that is ignorant ought to live The Masters are the Masters of Compassion, but they are the Masters of Wisdom as well

"From Chicago Mrs Besant worked eastward A cloud-burst near Menominee had swept away three bridges the day before, and we had to wait patiently until they were patched up sufficiently to permit our train to crawl slowly over them

"She left a trail of new Lodges behind her in Michigan In Ohio, Toledo, Sandusky, Cleveland each received a visit Mrs Besant has recently placed in the hands of the Central States Committee a number of library boxes, *containing full sets of books for elementary and advanced study*, to be circulated among the various Branches On our way from Cleveland to Buffalo, N Y, we passed not far from one of the famous 'camps' of the Spiritualists, and such a pressing invitation was sent us that it was decided to go to Lilydale to lecture for them Missing a train connection necessitated a long drive in the dark through country roads They were waiting at the 'camp,' and the Countess and Mrs Besant were immediately conducted to the canvas-sided 'auditorium' Her lecture on 'Life after Death' was listened to with deep interest, and

next morning many enquirers came ; for the more educated and thoughtful Spiritualists are tired of the mere round of phenomena and are eagerly seeking a philosophy which can explain what they know and lead them on to know more. Mrs. Besant lectured again, and a Branch was formed.

“After Buffalo and Niagara Falls, we crossed over Lake Ontario to Toronto, Canada. A dozen new members joined the Branch there, and a Lodge was formed at Hamilton. Returning over the blue waters of the lake, at Rochester, N. Y., Miss Susan B. Anthony took the chair at Mrs. Besant's lectures and a Branch was formed. All the interest in Theosophy which had been growing on our way seemed now to culminate, and in Boston a Branch of nearly fifty members was quickly formed ; some old members who had dropped away coming gladly into touch again. . . . Her farewell lecture in New York was on ‘Theosophy : its Past, its Present, and its Future,’ a vivid sketch of the origin of The Theosophical Society, its past troubles, its present position firmly grounded on knowledge gained by those who had followed the course laid down by its Founders, and its grand future as the spiritual helper and moral educator of races yet to come. This was a fitting conclusion to her six months of continual travel, joyful work and ungrudging aid to all who chose to ask for it.”

After a rest of but ten days she resumed her work of lecturing in England, and in December visited France, lecturing in English and in French.

When the 22nd Anniversary of The Theosophical Society was held at Adyar in December 1897 Mrs. Besant

was in London, but she sent greetings to the Indian members in the following letter to the President

Dec 3rd, 1897

My dear President,

Will you convey to my dear Indian brothers my loving greetings, and tell them that my heart remembers them though my tongue may not speak to them. Though thousands of miles divide our bodies, we are one in our hopes one in our love, one in the service of the Great Ones to whom our lives are dedicated

May Their blessing cheer your hearts and guide aright your deliberations

Your and Their loving friend,

ANNIE BESANT

1898

On January 4th Mrs Besant left England for Scandinavia, where she lectured on "Theosophy and Christianity, and "States of Consciousness

She writes of Christiania (Norway)

"Darkness covered the land in a way quite novel to us, there were only about five hours of daylight, and that was not light. The weather varied from clear blackness to foggy blackness. There was snow and ice, but no sun, and one felt that Nature here is really an unkind stepmother to her children. The grim tales of Norse mythology seem natural and proper, and the terrible wolf Fenris is felt as an appropriate inhabitant. But in spite of its grimness, Christiania gave us large and very intelligent audiences,

and Stockholm gave us a warm welcome. In Upsala, the old University town, the hall of the University was filled with attentive hearers. To our astonishment, Copenhagen presented us with an audience of a thousand people, a remarkable assemblage for the Danish capital, proving how deep was the interest aroused by Theosophy. Amsterdam seemed homelike after the dark North, with the familiar faces of our faithful Dutch workers. The Dutch press was more friendly than it had ever been before, and by its help Theosophical teachings have reached thousands of homes. The work finished at the Hague. It is good to see how in every land there are eager brains and hearts ready to welcome the message of Theosophy, as bringing a ray of light into the darkness of the world. Men are hungering for religion, but fear to be given stones instead of bread ; they are weary of formulae and empty promises, but listen gladly when truth is offered in a way that appeals to sound reason and sane emotion."

A lecture tour in Scotland followed, and on March 14th, 1898, Mrs. Besant left for India, going via Rome, where she lectured in the hall of the Society of the Press on, "*La Théosophie dans le Passé et dans l'Avenir.*"

Arriving in Benares on April 3rd, Mrs. Besant busied herself starting the Central Hindu College. She returned to England in June, lecturing chiefly in London in July and to the middle of August.

From September to December she was at Benares, except for short visits to some northern towns.

The Convention Hall at Adyar presented a brilliant appearance at 8 a.m. on the 27th December, when



Colonel Olcott conducted Mrs Besant to the platform to deliver the first of four morning lectures of her course on "The Evolution of Life and Form." The nave and transept, together with the outside galleries, were packed to overflowing, and the beloved speaker was greeted in the most enthusiastic fashion. His Excellency the Governor of Madras, Sir Arthur Havelock, was present, and was most cordially received. Mrs Besant's subject was "Ancient and Modern Science," and the theme was treated in a strain of fervid eloquence that it seemed she had never previously reached. She also gave an eloquent and impassioned address at the close of the Convention on "Theosophy and the Future of India." The following is an extract from that address.

India in the past was given by the Supreme the one great duty among the nations of the world, to be the mother of religion, to be the cradle of faith, to send out to all other peoples the truths of the spiritual life. That was the primary duty of India, and all good things were hers as long as she fulfilled her dharma. As gradually she fell away from the position of the mighty imperial mother of the world's faith, she lost all else that had made her glorious in the past. Her wealth diminished, her independence was gradually undermined, lower and lower she sank, until her people well nigh lost their place among the nations. Other nations have trodden that path before. There were mighty civilisations in the older world, and nothing but their ruins remain today to mark where once they ruled, fought and lived. While nation after nation died and was buried, India—India older than the oldest of these—is not

yet dead. Her dust is not yet on the funeral pyre. India still lives, breathing faint and low. India, the ancient mother, most ancient of all, still stands as Durga stands. Eternity lies behind the goddess, but she remains ever young ; for spirit knows no age, no birth, no dying. And where a nation stands emblem of spirituality, she must live ; though her sons deny her and her lovers stand afar off. The mother, looking over the land and asking for someone to serve her, raised her eyes to the mighty Gods and said : 'Lo, I will take some of my children's souls : . . and send them forth to other nations ; they shall be born among other peoples. . . . Their love shall remain when the love of the children in my land has grown cold. Then I will bring them back to my household from the far-off nations of the earth, and I will plant them here to tell my children what they should do, to recall amongst them the memory of their ancient faith, the possibility of revival that lies in the spiritual nature.' And they, from many lands, have heard the mother's call, and have come across many oceans to her summoning voice ; and they ask her own children, for very shame, to do her bidding, lest the children of her past, returning in the garb of a stranger, should be truer to India than those born on Indian soil. . . . I tell you that the future that lies before you shall be greater than your past has been, mightier in spiritual knowledge, grander in spiritual achievement, more potent in spiritual life ; that the very Rishis Themselves who are without, standing waiting, shall again find Their home on Indian soil. . . . When the greatest in the nation live the life that is simple, frugal, holy, in the discharge of duty ; then

only when the leaders are spiritual, all else shall they obtain ' .

1899

After a brief visit to Burma in January, during which she lectured and formed a Central Hindu College Committee Mrs Besant returned to Benares. Then she occupied herself almost exclusively with the organising of College Committees in many towns and in rapid and effective development of the College itself.

On April 22nd she left Bombay for Europe, arriving in England on May 6th.

On White Lotus Day a statue of H P B was unveiled at Adyar by the President-Founder. Mrs Besant wrote ' How different is May 8th 1899 from May 8th, 1891. Then sad hearts gathered round the cast-off body, wondering what would happen. Now her statue is unveiled in a world echoing with Theosophic thoughts, and some of her teachings are being justified by science and scholarship. The Society which she and Henry Steel Olcott founded is strong and well organised, at peace within and winning respect without, its literature is spreading and the teachings committed to its care are permeating modern thought ' .

Resuming her lecture work in England, Mrs Besant spoke on "The Ascent of Man," on "The Mahabharata," etc. She visited France, some eight hundred people listening to her lectures on "The Ancient Wisdom" at the Hotel des Sociétés Savantes. Again in England she lectured on

“The Christ” and “The Place of the Emotions in Human Evolution.”

During August Mrs. Besant attended the Wagner festival at Bayreuth, where she addressed a select audience of Wagnerites who had gone to attend the festival on “The Legend of Parsifal.” She writes of Wagner’s music :

“Truly some of his phrases and cadences belong to the Deva kingdom rather than to earth. They are echoes of the music of the Passion Devas.”

After a short visit to Amsterdam and Brussels, she returned to London, where she gave a most successful series of lectures on “Dreams” and “Eastern and Western Science.”

When back in India, in October, Mrs. Besant pushed forward her plans for the Central Hindu College. The ideals that were the basis of the life of the College aroused the sympathetic interest of the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, also of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province. She was present at the First Anniversary of the C.H.C. and delivered the closing address.

In December she gave the Convention lectures at Adyar on “Avataras,” with matchless eloquence to a spell-bound audience.

1900

During this year Mrs. Besant again devoted her organising talents to the building up of educational work and the re-creation of India’s greatness. . . . In March she

moved into Shanti Kunj, her beloved home at Benares for many years. She left India early in April, 1900, arriving in Italy on the 22nd, where she spoke in Naples, Rome, Florence, and Venice, and reached England in May.

She gave a series of addresses at the Small Queen's Hall, in May and June, on "The Emotions, their Place, Evolution, Culture and Use," and in July a series of talks at the Headquarters, 28 Albermarle Street, on "Thought Power, its Control and Culture."

During July and August she visited some of the larger English Lodges. In September she left for India.

Until the Annual Theosophical Convention met in Benares, Mrs. Besant visited some of the towns of northern India and began to stress some of the great teachings of Hindu theism branching out into the magnificent ideals that underlie all Hindu growth. She gathered them all into a superb appeal in her Convention address at Benares, on "Ancient Ideals in Modern Life."

### 1901

The whole of this year was spent in India. From January to March she emphasised in her lectures the immense significance of Hinduism, and as she went from town to town, spoke frequently on Hinduism and Theosophy. Education was always to the fore in Mrs. Besant's work, and for the sake of it she spent long periods at Benares consolidating the work of the Central Hindu College, of which she was "the life and soul." What Col. Olcott had done for Buddhism in his *Catechism* she now did for

Hinduism in Text Books for junior and senior students, and her anonymous *Advanced Textbook of Hinduism* was, and is, not only a fine and authorised exposition of Hinduism, but an equally fine exposition of Theosophy. She gave another series of brilliant lectures at the College, this time on the Ramayana, the epic story of Shri Rama and his faultless Sita. It was published as *Shri Ramachandra, the Ideal King*.

Mrs. Besant was drawing into the work for India's regeneration the finest Indians in many walks of life, and winning at the same time Government approbation for the titanic task she had undertaken. She visited about thirty towns throughout the North, West and East, and everywhere stirred the people deeply and induced them to take action, especially in education. . . .

Colonel Olcott writes :

“ Our dear Mrs. Besant reached Adyar on December 24th from Benares in a state of prostration, after a violent attack of fever, which was sad to see. No one outside the number of us who recognise the fact of the watchful guidance of our Teachers would have dared to anticipate that on the second subsequent day she would be able to mount the platform and lecture. She faced a packed audience of 1,500 and discoursed for an hour and a quarter on ‘Islam,’ without a falter in her voice from beginning to end; and yet it had taken her almost five minutes to descend from her bedroom to the hall on the floor below.” This lecture was the first of a series on religions : Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, which were published as *The Religious Problem in India*.

1902

After the Convention Mrs Besant made an extended tour of India, and also pursued her educational work

On April 19th she left for England on the S S Victoria, lecturing on board at Suez

Of her return to England in 1902 Miss Edith Ward wrote

“ Although she was much fatigued by the tiresome and delayed journey from Brindisi, she looked more like her old self and speedily took up a heavy burden of work with her usual cheerfulness We all rejoice that the fever from which she suffered in India seems to have passed entirely away, and although it has left her far from strong, and more easily fatigued than in former days, we trust she will gradually regain her former powers of endurance The work she has undertaken is very heavy, and we are now in the midst of three courses of lectures, besides special meetings and odd lectures here and there Over 300 members assembled to hear her more advanced series, and people are turned away from the public lectures for lack of room Speaking on ‘Theosophy and Imperialism,’ she showed what was the duty of an imperial race, and what *should be its glory and function in the history of the world*, she was heard to the farthest corner of the hall

In August she visited Holland and Brussels

Leaving London 15 October, Mrs Besant went first to Berlin for a Convention of Lodges, then to Paris Moving southwards she visited Geneva, Grenoble, Marseilles and Nice, then to Genoa Rome came next, then

Florence, Bologna, Milan and Turin, before leaving, 24 November, for India.

In this year Mrs. Besant engaged in yet another activity, being "directed" thereto. This was the Co-Masonic Order, "L'Ordre Maçonnerie Mixte International, Le Droit Humain." Miss Francesca Arundale (aunt of Dr. G. S. Arundale) was the first English lady to enter this Order. She informed Mrs. Besant about it, who felt "that a Masonic movement open to men and women alike could be made a powerful force for good in the world." Mrs. Besant was initiated in Paris, and through her promotion of the interests of the Order it spread very rapidly to many countries. She became The Very Illustrious Vice-President, Member of the Supreme Council, Most Puissant Grand Commander of the British Jurisdiction.

At the Annual Convention, held at Benares in December, Mrs. Besant spoke on "The Laws of the Higher Life."

## 1903

Mrs. Besant travelled much in the North, combining the exposition of Theosophy with ever-increasing breadth and beauty, with a resistless drive on behalf of education. She strove to broaden the minds of the elders, men and women, and induce them to support reforms, and held out to youth the ideal of a nobler type of education, the preparation for service and leadership in a reawakening India.

At the Annual Convention this year, held at Adyar in December, the President, Colonel Olcott, finding himself in difficulty on account of the number of people



present, Mrs Besant offered to give a popular lecture on the 27th December in the open air, before commencing her usual course of the four lectures at Convention. Her subject was "The Value of Theosophy in the Raising of India". On one of the lawns an area was enclosed with a fence, and seats and carpets were placed, but by early dawn such a crowd had gathered that they swept away the fence, and took possession of all the ground, the benches and chairs being passed over their heads to the outside, and the crowd sat on the carpet spread around the platform. By the time Mrs Besant appeared, the audience numbered 5,000 persons. Her voice rang out clear and strong, in spite of the fact that she was suffering from a severe cold, and her lecture was listened to in profound silence with occasional outbursts of applause. The tax on her throat was too much, however, and the subsequent lectures had to be given in the Convention Hall. At the first lecture the crush was very great, and so importunate were the outsiders that they actually smashed the heavy wood and iron western gate of the Hall and came in with a rush.

1904

Until the end of January, Mrs Besant visited a number of towns in Southern and Central India, crowding each day with meetings and work, starting at 6.30 a.m. and lecturing sometimes twice a day. Education was her chief subject, also Hinduism in the light of Theosophy, and she promoted the *Central Hindu College Magazine*.

The following letter from Mrs. Besant, written from Benares on February 17th (1904), will prove of interest :

“ My dear Friends,

I am told, on what ought to be good authority, that there is a growing tendency in the Theosophical Society in London to consider me as a sacrosanct personality, beyond and above criticism. Frankly, I cannot believe that any claim so wild and preposterous is set up, or that many know me so little as to imagine that, if it were set up, I would meet it with anything but the uttermost condemnation. Even a few people holding and acting on such a theory would be a danger to the Society ; if any considerable number held and acted on it, the Society would perish. Liberty of opinion is the life-breath of the Society ; the fullest freedom in criticising opinions is necessary for the preservation of the growth and evolution of the Society. A ‘ commanding personality ’—to use the cant of the day—may in many ways be of service to a movement, but in the Theosophical Society the work of such a personality would be too dearly purchased if it were bought by the surrender of individual freedom of thought ; and the Society would be safer if it did not number such a personality among its members.

“ Over and over again I have emphasised this fact, and have urged free criticism of all opinions, my own among them. Like everybody else, I often make mistakes ; and it is a poor service to me to confirm me in those mistakes by abstaining from criticism. I would sooner never write another word than have my words made into a gag for other people’s thoughts. All my life I have followed the

practice of reading the harshest criticisms with a view to utilising them, and I do not mean as I grow old to help the growth of crystallisation by evading the most rigorous criticism. Moreover, anything that has been done through me—not by me, for Theosophy would be outbalanced immeasurably by making my crude knowledge a measure for the thinking in the movement and by turning me into an obstacle of future progress. So I pray you, if you come across any such absurd ideas that you will resist them in your own person and repudiate them on my behalf. No greater disservice could be done to the Society or to me than by allowing them to spread.

"It is further alleged that a policy of ostracism is enforced against those who do not hold this view of me. I cannot insult any member of the Society by believing that he would inuate or endorse such a policy. It is obvious that this would be an intolerable tyranny to which no self-respecting man would submit. I may say, in passing, that in all selections for office in the movement the sole consideration should be the power of the candidate to serve the Society, and not his opinion of any person. Colonel Olcott, Mr. Sinnett, Mr. Mead or myself. We do not want faction fights for party leaders, but a free choice of the best man. Pardon me for troubling you with a formal repudiation of a view that seems too absurd to merit denial, but, as it is gravely put to me as a fact, I cannot ignore it. For the Society, to me, is the object of my deepest love and service, my life is given to it, it embodies my ideal of a physical plane movement. And I would rather make myself ridiculous by tilting at a windmill

such as I believe this idea to be than run the smallest chance of leaving to grow within the Society a form of personal idolatry which would be fatal to its usefulness in the world. In the T. S. there is no orthodoxy, there are no popes. It is a band of students eager to learn the truth, and its well-being rests on the maintenance of this ideal."

Mrs. Besant spent February and March in Benares, and left April 8th for Europe, passing through Rome, Florence and Genoa, and speaking on Theosophy in each place.

She stayed in Paris for a few days into which a number of meetings were crowded.

Mrs. Besant returned to England to continue her lecture work. From the Small Queen's Hall, where she gave a series on "Theosophy and the New Psychology," hundreds were turned away each night. In June, 1904, she opened the eighth annual Dutch Convention, and was the chief figure of the International Congress which met in the same month. Some of the subjects treated this year were: "Is Theosophy Anti-Christian?" "The New Psychology," "The Message of Theosophy to Mankind." She also visited Sweden, Norway and Germany.

On her way back to India she opened the new Headquarters in Rome, 17th November, and a visit to the Vatican was arranged for her.

At the Annual Convention, Adyar, Mrs. Besant gave the four Convention Lectures on "Theosophy in Relation to Human Life."

1905

Until May, Mrs. Besant spent her time travelling in India. Speaking in Bombay in 1905 on "The Unification of India," she pointed out that

"One of the greatest difficulties that struck at the root of unification was that there had never been a united India in the past. Temporary unions there had been from time to time, but never was there one unified nation extending from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Bengal to Kathiawar. The task before Indians, therefore, was to make a self-sustaining and self-conscious nationality."

She addressed Lodges on Theosophy, constantly drawing women into the Movement when and where possible, for at that time they were unaccustomed to taking any part in public life. On May 13 she left for Europe, stopping at Milan, Budapest, Strasbourg and Nancy.

She remained in Paris from June 10 to 21, and not only lectured on and worked for Theosophy, but also attended the Supreme Council of International Co-Freemasonry.

The European Theosophical Federation Congress was held in London. The first public lecture of the Congress, on "The Work of Theosophy in the World," was given by Mrs. Besant in the Large Queen's Hall, July 7, when every seat was occupied. In opening an exhibition of Arts and Crafts arranged by members Mrs. Besant said:

"Nothing is outside the realm of Theosophy that tends to serve, uplift and ennoble humanity. And so as Theosophy spreads, and we more and more understand and

bring into harmonic interaction the three worlds in which our evolution is taking place, all ideas will find more beautiful expression, and the world of form will indeed manifest the divinity of man."

Mrs. Besant arrived in Benares 23 September, and first gave much attention to the Central Hindu College. She then toured through northern towns, stressing in her lectures the need of a Hindu revival. In a letter to Babu Hirendra Nath Datta, she wrote :

"The needs of India are, among others, the development of a national spirit, and an education founded on Indian ideals and enriched, not dominated, by the thought and culture of the West."

She arrived in Adyar in December for the Convention, where she gave a course of lectures on the *Bhagavad Gitâ*.

## 1906

Mrs. Besant spent the whole of this year in India. She travelled from Adyar through Hyderabad, to Calcutta and then to Benares.

Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales (later King George V and Queen Mary) visited the Central Hindu College on February 20th. On the following morning the Princess sent for Mrs. Besant to write in her private autograph book ; Mrs. Besant requested that a photo of the King be placed in the College Hall. Mrs. Besant and others were honoured with invitations to the royal reception.

From *A Short History of The Theosophical Society*  
compiled by Josephine Ransom

“ Throughout this year Mrs Besant was travelling the length and breadth of India, expounding with vigour the ideals for which she stood and worked. All India was responding to the call to liberty which she was sounding. She was working assiduously for the establishment of a Hindu University and wherever she went collected funds for its endowment. Education and social reforms occupied her very fully. In her public work for The Theosophical Society she presented inspiringly the many facets of Theosophy, especially the meaning of Brotherhood, and gave larger and more universal application of the rules of Yoga.

“ Because of the state of Colonel Olcott’s health, the question of a new President occupied Mrs Besant’s mind. She could see no one more suitable for the office than Mr Bertram Keightley, for she felt sure that neither Mr Sinnett nor Mr Mead would consent to take it, and she was herself so immersed in Indian activities, and the building up of the Hindu University, that she felt she would not have the time to give to the heavy responsibilities such a position would entail.

“ Arrangements for Convention went on, and in all these the President (Colonel Olcott) took a great interest. Mrs Besant gave the Convention Lectures on ‘ The Wisdom of the Upanishads. ’ On 28th December the President was well enough to be carried down to open the Convention. Mrs Besant read his Presidential Address for him. He was carried down again on the 31st to close the Convention, to read over to the assembly his Inaugural

Address of 1875, and to pronounce the closing words. He gave Mrs. Besant authority 'to act for me as President'."

1907

Colonel Olcott died on February 17th 1907 at 7.27 a.m. During his last illness there were appearances of the Masters and instructions to nominate Annie Besant as his successor.

In June Mrs. Besant was elected as President by an overwhelming majority.

From Dr. Besant's *First Presidential Address* :

By an overwhelming majority you have ratified the nomination of our President-Founder, made by his Master's order, and have called upon me to take up the work as his successor in the high office of President of the Theosophical Society. . . . Help me, I pray you all, in filling well the office to which I have been elected, and share with me the burden of our common work. . . . Only through you and with you can the Presidency be useful to the Society. Help me so to fill it as to hand it on, a richer legacy, to my successor. And so may the Masters guide and prosper the work which they have given into my hands, and blessed.

*The Theosophist*, October 1907.

I write in Germany, in the midst of the woods of Saxony, where I have taken refuge in order to do some necessary writing, after coming out of the whirl in England,





ANNIE BESANT ABOUT 1907



and before plunging into the whirl in America . . . Various articles must be written to aid the great work which is opening out in the many fields of Theosophical Activity, both inner and outer.

In the Saxony pine-woods some fairly extensive researches were made into the constitution of chemical atoms, and, with the assistance of some friendly Theosophical artists, some representations have been drawn of these "name and" airy "nothings," which will prove interesting to Theosophists, and perhaps to non-Theosophists also. Occult Chemistry throws much light on chemical possibilities, and offers sign-posts pointing in directions in which research might be advantageously carried on . . .

It seems that the account of the American Convention was lost in the post . . . It was a very great success, Dr. Weller van Hook was elected General Secretary, and his high character and great ability make him a most suitable choice.

My last week in England was a very busy one, from the landing at Plymouth, after a stormy voyage, on October 7th, to leaving London for Holland on October 15th. There were five lectures in it to very varied audiences.

The brief time in Amsterdam, the northern Venice, was crowded full of work, and, as one member remarked, when we were going away, a fortnight's work seemed to have been accomplished in two days.

On the afternoon of the 20th we crossed to Sweden by steamer, reaching Malmo at 4.30 p.m. There was a lecture at 7, and we left for Stockholm at half-past 9 p.m. Here I must really take breath.

On the 22nd, King Oscar (Sweden) granted me an audience, at which I presented to him *Esoteric Christianity*, in English, and *The Ancient Wisdom*, in Swedish : a long and interesting conversation followed, King Oscar being, as is well known, a man deeply read in philosophical and religious questions, and he showed much interest in the points discussed.

From Northern Scandinavia I fled swiftly southward to fair Italy, the flowery land of romance and idealism.

The last European lecture was given in the Università Popolare, to a large audience. It was a thorough success, and closed the arduous western work. I must not leave it without bearing witness to the fulfilment, throughout this strenuous time, of the promise given by the Master at Adyar, that He would overshadow me. Never have I worked so ceaselessly, with such unflagging vigour and sustained force, as during this time, and never have others borne such witness to the life and energy outpoured. To Him be the thanks.

The vessel is bearing us—"us" is now Mrs. Russak, Miss Renda and myself—swiftly and smoothly to the fair Island of Ceylon, where I am to try, however inadequately, to partly fill the gap left by the passing away of the President-Founder.

We landed at Colombo on November 23rd, and my thoughts fled back to 1893, when the Colonel welcomed the Countess Wachtmeister and myself at the same spot, on our first visit to the East. Then, as now, we went first to the Headquarters of the Buddhist Theosophical Society, where loving welcome was given. From that, to the

Musaeus School for Buddhist girls, where Mrs Higgins, with unflagging zeal and devotion, strong through every difficulty, has built up a successful boarding-school for girls

The next day was full of engagements, including a visit to the aged High Priest, Sumangala—who was very friendly—and a lecture at Ananda College on the “ Noble Eightfold Path

A day in Kandy, through the splendid scenery that makes one of the noblest panoramas of natural beauty in the world There is hope of a girls’ school there as outcome of the visit Next day, back to Colombo again, and in due course to the steamer for Tuticorin, the quay crowded with singing children and affectionate elders, and so farewell to the Beautiful Isle

At home in India, on the 30th November and what a journey it was! Addresses, flowers, fruits, at station after station, until the carriage was a garden, I never realised before how many Branches we had along the railway line

At Adyar, a few hours later, two addresses were presented in a crowded meeting, and then we went all over house and grounds and found everything in admirable order

*The following section, 1908 to 1929, has been compiled chiefly from “ The Theosophist and ‘ The Adyar Bulletin Passages from other sources, e g , linking sentences, are enclosed in brackets*

## 1908

It is my hope that this little monthly messenger, *The Adyar Bulletin*, from Headquarters will form a golden

thread of affection and kindly feeling between the Society's centre and the members scattered all over the world. I should be glad to receive from them any news from their own localities that might be of interest to Theosophists elsewhere. . . . Send us your good wishes, I pray you, across the seas and lands that divide us, that we may be loyal servants of the Masters.

### FOUNDATION OF THE ORDER OF SERVICE

The month has rolled quietly by in quiet work, and on the 2nd February I arrived at Headquarters, where much business was awaiting me. On the way from Benares, with Babu Bhagavân Dâs Sahab, who is kindly working as my Private Secretary, we spent twelve hours in Calcutta. There I went to luncheon at Government House, to discuss with His Excellency the Viceroy a scheme that has been formulated for the University of India. . . . Lord Minto was good enough, after considering the reasons I laid before him, to say that he would do all in his power to assist us in realising our project; his liberal and sympathetic nature is prompt to see the justice of the Indian wish to establish a national university, and it is fortunate for us that this scheme is coming to birth under so just and mild a ruler. . . . From Calcutta we went to Vizagapatam and there was begun a scheme I have long been brooding over, whereby Theosophists, who wish to carry out the idea of the Masters of forming a Brotherhood for the helping of the world, spiritually, intellectually, morally and physically, should be more fully realised. Spiritually,

intellectually and morally we are doing good work, but little has been done towards the physical helping. So, to complete the circle of Theosophical life, a "T S Order of Service" has now been founded, within which Leagues may be formed for any good and useful purpose, intellectual, moral or physical which shall work on the principles and in the light of Theosophy for the world's helping.

The month of February seems destined to be important in the annals of the Theosophical Society. On the 4th of February, two days after my arrival, a suggestion was made to me that it would be a good thing for us to acquire the estate which lies to the east of our grounds, along the river bank. I spoke about it to one or two friends, who promptly offered to lend part of the money at a very low rate of interest. I thereupon wrote to two or three more. In a week the money was in my hands—Rs 12,000 of it in gifts. My agents, one of whom had acted for H P B and Colonel Olcott in the purchase of the Adyar estate, secured the land for Rs 40,000, and the sale was completed and possession of the land given to me on February 15th. The estate comprises eighty-one acres, with a very fine bungalow, and the land yields an income which may be much improved, from fruit trees and timber. Its control passes at once to the T S, and the title-deeds will be handed over as soon as I have paid off the loan contracted. This I hope to do in the course of a couple of years, out of my earnings even if no one else cares to share in the gift to our beloved Society.

The days roll by swiftly in varied work, and Adyar is full of activities, all harnessed to the service of the

Theosophical Society. Workers are coming in, and little houses have been planned and built, so as to accommodate the growing staff, while preserving a ring of space, to ensure quiet, round the central building itself. During my absence in Australia—I sail from Colombo on May 16th in P. and O. S.S. “Multan”—Dr. English will be in responsible charge of *The Theosophist* with Mr. Wadia as his assistant. I return home to India in September, the American trip having been put off till next year.

Adelaide,

June 16th, 1908.

June opened in Perth with a busy day—first a *matinée*, i.e. an afternoon lecture for the convenience of many who wished to come but who lived too far away to return after an evening one. Then came many interviews and a members’ meeting. I met an old Freethought acquaintance, Mr. Wallace Nelson, who has remained at his old moorings, despite the onward sweep of the current of thought. Very pleasant memories remain of Perth and Fremantle. The audiences were very large, very receptive, and quick to understand; the West Australians seem to be an alert, progressive people, keenly alive and eager to know. . . . They are very kindly and hospitable, and made us quite at home with hearty welcome. Thus are formed ties that reassert themselves in future lives.

It is best to draw a veil over the next four days, rolling and pitching on a grey sea, dashed with white foam, stretching away to a grey horizon. . . . But all passes, and, as we drew slowly up to the new wharf at Adelaide, a line



of smiling faces told that the warm circle of Theosophic Brotherhood had opened again to enring us. A flight of the younger ones to the waiting special secured us a carriage, and as they sprang out we climbed in and away we went for the city carrying with us the roses and violets that a South Australian mid-winter yet permits. A hospitable Scotch home opened its doors to me, and a French one welcomed Mrs John, for we are poly-nationed over here, and the Lodge contains not only Scotch, English and Irish, but men from France Germany, Poland and maybe from other lands.

The Adelaide campaign opened on June 9th with an E S meeting many interviews and a public lecture in the Town Hall to a large but somewhat impassive audience. However, they listened intently, and warmed up towards the end.

On the 10th, I addressed a very crowded meeting of the Labour Party in the Trades Hall with the President of the Trades Council in the chair, on "What Theosophy has to say to the Workers." the audience was a great contrast to that of the night before all alive and palpitating with interest, breaking into volleys of cheers for what it approved, and of interjections on what puzzled it, as I expounded Brotherhood, Reincarnation and Karma as the triple basis of a stable society.

The Adelaide visit concluded with a lecture in the Town Hall. The place was packed and a large crowd in the street when I arrived. "No admission, ma'am," said a courteous policeman as I reached the closed gates. "I don't mind," said I, "but then there can be no lecture."

“Oh!” said he, laughing, and the big iron gates were opened. It was a fine sight, the great hall packed in every corner, people standing along the walls, sitting on the steps to the platform, and the lecture was most attentively listened to. This morning’s paper has much of Theosophy in it, for the Adelaide clergy are behind the times, and preached nineteenth century sermons against it, with a plentiful lack of knowledge.

Melbourne,

*June 24th, 1908.*

“Melbourne has no less than four Lodges, and they have been acting together in organising the work of my visit. . . .

Here, as in Adelaide, a Lotus Circle exists, and many little ones, with older lads and lasses, gathered on Sunday for an address. The bright faces and intent eyes made a pretty picture, and I am told that the children much enjoy their weekly meetings.

I must put on record one comment on the Perth lectures that appealed much to me. A gentleman who attended them—and they were on Reincarnation, Karma, and the Brotherhood of Religions—was asked how he enjoyed them. He replied warmly, but remarked: “I expected to hear about Theosophy, and these were all common sense.” The implication is delightful.

*June 28th.* The Melbourne Branches, the members of which have shown me unstinted kindness, made me a very useful present, a gold wristlet to carry a watch, a great improvement on the leather band which I have

hitherto worn, and which does not suit the heat of India. A little gift was also made to Mrs John, who is travelling with me, and who generously lifts from my shoulders all the material cares of the tour. Thus ended the fortnight in the Victorian capital.

Sydney

July 7th 1908

We left Melbourne by the afternoon express of June 29th, for the capital of New South Wales and travelled through the evening, night, and morning of June 30th reaching Sydney at 11 a.m. It was bitterly cold in the early morning, thick hoar-frost covering the landscape and the water, chilly as ice, depriving the fingers of feeling. The Sydney friends, headed by Mr John the well-loved General Secretary, gave us warm greeting on the platform.

The first public lecture was given on July 2nd in the large Centenary Hall. It was a very attentive and interested crowd, and listened with eager keenness to the discourse on Reincarnation—a subject which seems to attract people in Australia more than any other.

Brisbane

July 18th, 1908

Mrs John and I steamed out of Sydney station on July 13th, amid the loving farewells of a crowd of members, assembled to bid us God-speed. Many a pleasant memory remains of the visit to Sydney. Australia stands solid for loyal co-operation, and for earnest work for the cause. I feel that I may rely on the Section for support in guarding the Society's liberty and in

maintaining it on the broad basis that some are so anxious to narrow.

Through the evening and night we fled onwards, and the morning found us on the northern highlands of New South Wales, with hoar-frost whitening the tree-branches, and the sun gleaming redly through the mist-laden air. At 11 a.m. of the morning of the 14th, we changed at the boundary line of the adjacent States, and went on by the narrower gauge of Queensland. Presently we were whirling down the curves cut along the mountain-sides of the Toowoomba Range—reminding one of the line across the Ghauts to Bombay—and on through the darkening twilight till night fell again, and then, at 9 p.m., into the brilliance of the Brisbane station, and into a crowd of new faces but loving hearts, that gave welcome as warm as had been the farewells of the Sydney brethren. . . .

A pleasant feature of these Australian gatherings is the meeting with friends of the past that one knew in England in earlier days, and now and again with some one who knew and loved our H.P.B. One old gentleman told me how, in London long ago, he had looked round the Society, and wondered how it would go on, when H.P.B. passed away for a while, and how he had rejoiced when, from the outer world, I had entered the Theosophical circle, and H.P.B. had welcomed me to the work. Yet such anxiety need never be, for as Upendranath Babu wisely and rightly said last Christmas, so long as the T. S. is under the guidance of the Masters there will always be some one who will command the confidence of the large majority of the Society.

The Queensland work made a good conclusion to the Australian tour. Monday (20th) saw us in the train, once more steaming southwards, en route to New Zealand

Auckland, New Zealand

July 27th, 1908

Really at the antipodes at last, Greenwich exactly under our feet, and India a quarter of the world away, a half-way house to England. But Theosophy is as well loved here as in other lands, and has warm hearts to welcome it, and strong brains to defend it. It is cold, but the country is emerald green after two months of rain, and today the sun is shining brightly, and white fleecy clouds, flung across the sky, remind one of an English day in spring.

Wellington,

August 3rd, 1908

Auckland yielded two very large meetings for the public lectures, and between 250 and 300 persons attended the meeting for questions, and seemed to be thoroughly interested.

At Wellington, the capital of the Dominion, a crowd of members awaited us on the platform, and we were among them by half past seven in the evening, receiving their hearty greetings. The next day . . . there was a large gathering in the Town Hall for the evening lecture. The meeting was attentive, and finally enthusiastic, but I should think that Theosophy is, at present, but little known in Wellington; it does not yet seem to be "in the air."

Dunedin,  
*August 10th, 1908*

Dunedin is quite a Scotch city, and one hears the pretty Scotch accent on every side. Three public lectures, six members' and E. S. meetings, and half an hour to the Lotus Circle filled the days to overflowing, and on August 10th we took train to the Bluff, and went on board the steamer that was to carry us away from New Zealand after a fortnight of strenuous work.

Much gratitude remains in my heart for all the overflowing love and kindness which have been poured out on me so richly during the last tour. Not to me, as a person, was it given, I joy to know, but to the President of the Theosophical Society, the messenger of the Blessed Masters, the witness-bearer to Their watchful care and to the out-pouring of Their power. . . . That the heavy Australian tour has left me strong and bright is largely due to Mrs. John. If I do not name others for special thanks, it is because all I have met have been loving and kind.

The tour has taken me over 17,630 miles of land and sea, during 44 days and nights of travel; 62 days have been given to work, and the work has comprised 44 public lectures and 90 meetings—at most of which an hour's address has been given, followed by the answering of questions—and a very large number of private interviews. It does not seem a bad record for a woman of over sixty, who, a year ago, was declared by some who wished to discredit her, as being in a state of "senile decay," and therefore incapable of filling the office of President of the Theosophical Society.



Hindu College who travelled down to do any service they could render. They all worked with an energy beyond praise, selling books, marshalling the crowds to their places, keeping the road open for speakers, and—the kindest act of all—selling the work of and collecting money for the little Panchama children, their unhappily placed brothers and sisters. . . . As the Peace of the Master has brooded over the final days of the year (1908) that is over, so doth His Power go forth with us into the days of the year that lies in front. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, January).

On February 10th Mr. Leadbeater arrived with Van Manen, and was welcomed by the entire Headquarters' staff, residents and students, making quite a procession. . . . Welcome, thrice welcome is he, and most glad shall I be of his help, both in writing and teaching work.

The last Sunday in Madras was a busy one ; the usual E.S. and T.S. Meetings began the day, and the latter was followed by some initiations into the T.S. in the afternoon. . . . Then came the closing lecture of the series delivered on five consecutive Sundays, at which His Excellency Sir Arthur Lawley, the Governor, was pleased to be present, and this was followed by his friendly inspection of house, library and grounds. Then off to the train, which steamed away in the cool and quiet darkness across India to Bombay.

The Press Building was duly opened on April 15th, 1909, with a slight but pleasant ceremony. All the work-people, headed by the Superintendent, and the residents in Headquarters, gathered in front of the doors of the large central room, and with a few words the President declared it open, throwing wide the doors and presenting the key to



the Superintendent The whole company then walked round the hall, in the centre of which a type-case was placed as symbol Flowers, fruits and sweets were distributed two fires were lighted and camphor offered and burned, and the President announced that an extra day's pay would be given to each worker It is interesting to note that even the small boys have a sense of the value and dignity of their work 'spreading knowledge over India'

[Mrs Besant left Bombay on 23 April for London]

London is a good deal changed as regards traffic Private carriages have almost disappeared, and motors have taken their places They add unpleasantly to the smells of the streets but are otherwise innocuous But London is certainly more noisy than ever with the continual rush of the motors of all kinds and the incessant tooting of their horns of warning One feels rather as though one were in one of H G Wells' stories

The next few months will be very busy ones a series of seven Sunday lectures has been arranged for Sundays in London, and a series of four, for members of the T S only under the auspices of the Blavatsky and the H P B Lodges In addition to these, in London I speak at the Convention, at the Christo-Theosophical Society founded in the days of H P B and presided over by Sir Richard Stapley, and at the great Humanitarian World-Congress, holding its Public meeting in Queen's Hall

In the provinces public lectures and Lodge meetings have been arranged at Blackpool—to open a new Lodge—Manchester, Newcastle, Sunderland, Leeds, Derby, Edinburgh, Glasgow Brighton, Letchworth (Garden City)

—to open a new Lodge—Bournemouth, Southampton, Liverpool, Sheffield, Birmingham, Nottingham, Dublin, Bradford, Harrogate, and Oxford. Then abroad there will be lectures in Belgium, Holland, Hungary, France and Italy, and a two months' tour in the United States. If health and strength hold, a good record of work for the Theosophical Society will have been put in ere Indian soil is again trodden by its President. May the blessing of the Masters prosper the work done in Their sacred Cause and in Their name !  
(*The Theosophist*, July 1909).

24th May. It was pleasant to meet once more my old friend W. T. Stead, and to find him as keenly interested as ever in all questions touching the deeper side of life. He is intensely in earnest in verifying communications from those who have passed over, and is endeavouring to establish a reliable means of communication between the two worlds.

Thursday, May 27th, saw the General Secretary, Miss Bright, some other members and myself in the train for Budapest. At Vienna we picked up the French General Secretary and his sisters, Mrs. Russak and others, and arrived at Budapest on May 29th, for the International Federation of European Societies, which was to open on the 30th.

June 2nd. . . . I closed the Congress of 1909. Dr. Steiner delivered a very interesting lecture in the evening, and at its conclusion we all drove up the mountain which dominates Budapest and supped together, while the strains of gipsy music filled the air, and the full moon shone down on the gleaming Danube and the wide plain.

Scotland claimed me for a week beginning with June 7th. It is pleasant to visit the Lodges and to witness the life and energy pulsing in them, and pleasant also to greet old friends and make new ones in the many interviews that fill all stray corners of time.

July 2nd saw the opening meeting of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in Great Britain and Ireland. As President of the T. S. I. delivered a lecture in the Large Queen's Hall on "The Place of Theosophy in the Coming Civilisation," and the great audience showed itself to be extraordinarily responsive to the ideas presented to it. It is always a thrilling moment as one stands silently before the crowd in that big hall, and lifts one's eyes from area to balcony, from balcony to gallery and beholds the sea of expectant faces, alert and eager. And then the faces change like the sea, as wave after wave of thought, of emotion, sweeps over them, and the power of the Holy Ones is made manifest, and the atmosphere changes, and life grows full and strong.

The Watch-Tower on the 2nd day of August 1909, is set up in New York City. Looking eastward, I see over a grey mass of water the England I have left behind, and the last ten days of English work.

The sunshine was brilliant as the "Philadelphia" drew slowly alongside the dock on Saturday, July 31st, and a crowd of friends with kind faces and outstretched hands greeted my landing, to say nothing of four or five cameras, avid for photographs for the press. *The New York Herald* had the following paragraph :

"Mrs. Annie Besant is expected from England at the Park Avenue Hotel today. So many of her admirers arranged to meet her at the ship that the steamship company refused to issue any more permits. There is a new drink at the Park Avenue Hotel called 'A bunch of violets.' It is to be taken after coffee, and consists of cream of violets, with benedictine and lemon peel frapped."

I am amused to find "a new drink" and myself linked by the Park Avenue Hotel; however, one is not obliged to drink the drink, and the Hotel is a charming and quiet one, with a central court filled with trees and flowers, and a gallery running round it in which meals are served. Mr. Warrington and Mrs. Kochersperger have kindly taken charge of me, and we eat our simple meals of vegetables and fruit in these pleasant surroundings. . . . Mr. Harry Hotchener brought Mr. Fullerton's regrets that he was too feeble for the waiting at the docks, and I called upon him the same evening and spent with him a pleasant half-hour. . . . He enquired affectionately after "the great man" as he always calls Mr. Leadbeater.

Mr. Warrington and I walked along Madison Avenue, to look at the old home of the Section. As we came near I thought to myself: "How fond Judge was of New York;" "And am still," said a quiet voice, and there he was, walking beside me, as he and I had so often walked in the nineties. He will help much in the work of this tour, for he loves the American people, and is ever eager to labour for their benefit.<sup>1</sup> (*The Theosophist*, October).

[<sup>1</sup> Mr. Judge passed in 1896].

On Wednesday, the 11th August, we reached Chicago, and had the pleasure of greeting warmly the worthy General Secretary, Dr Weller van Hook

The public lecture in Chicago drew a large audience, intent from the opening to the closing words We had to go straight from the hall to the railway station, to start at ten for Duluth, at the head of Lake Superior Mr Jinarajadasa has been here lately, and attracted audiences of two hundred people—twice as large as one which gave scant welcome to a well-known Arctic explorer, who remarked afterwards that he had gone right to the North Pole but had found nothing so frigid as Duluth

Mr Jinarajadasa has become very popular in the States for his lucid and attractive exposition of Theosophical ideas, while his gentle courtesy and quiet reserve win him admiration and respect However Duluth despite its reputation, treated us exceedingly well

Seattle gave us a large audience keenly interested in "Theosophy, Its Meaning and Value" on the Sunday evening of our arrival—an arrival brightened by the presence of Mr Jinarajadasa who is to deliver a course of lectures after my departure The work finished, we betook ourselves to the steamer instead of to the train, in order to wind our way past islands and forests to Vancouver British Columbia On the 24th August we landed within the huge circle of Britain's Empire God save the King!

Pasadena, Sept 4th Here I gave a lecture in the Shakespeare Club, and answered questions, and then we took a short automobile drive through this prettiest

of towns. One very pleasant thing was the reverence shown for living things ; no birds may be killed in the town, and our little winged brothers are fearless and tame. . . . Kindness to living creatures is taught in the Pasadena schools, as well as practised by their elders, and the town is a centre of good influence.

29th September. New York was in the midst of a tumultuous celebration, the Hudson-Fulton festival, and the papers were crammed with accounts of pageants, aeroplane flights, marches, naval displays. It naturally played havoc with the lectures, and audiences were small—a new experience in New York.

On October 1st, there was a reception in the afternoon, at which a birthday gift was made to me from the New York Lodges—a gift which I have placed to the credit of the Blavatsky Gardens' purchase fund. A member returning from Chili brought me a very prettily drawn address of greeting signed by members in Valparaiso, and a handsome silver triangle, bearing the seal of the Theosophical Society ; it will go into the memento case at Headquarters, to bear silent witness to the love which pours thither from all parts of the world.

October 2nd saw a group of loving and faithful members gathered round their President on the deck of the "Cedric," which was to bear her back to the Old World. Two of them, Mr. Warrington and Mrs. Kochersperger, had travelled with me all the time over the 10,620 miles which measured the trip since I landed in New York on July 31st. My grateful thanks go to both for the unvarying and unwearied kindness which guarded

me throughout the journey, shielding me from all discomfort and doing all that could be done to lighten the heavy work.

Ireland The outcome of the visit to Dublin is the formation of two Lodges—a very satisfactory beginning for the Theosophical Society in Ireland. Each will start with about twenty members.

On the 20th of October many friends gathered at Oxford for the lecture to be delivered in the Town Hall. The large building was filled with an interested audience, and Professor L. P. Jacks, the Editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, took the chair.

The last English lecture was given on October 21st to the Spiritualist Alliance.

[Mrs. Besant left on 22nd October for Holland and France.]

Paris was great on interviews, eight mortal hours of them in three days. After the public lecture on the 31st came a reception at the ever hospitable home of the Blechs, where gathered members from Tunis, Algiers, and very many from provincial towns. In the evening, the General Secretaries of France and Great Britain and myself quitted Paris for Geneva. Geneva is an intellectual city, *par excellence*, but it is stifled with the arid thought of Calvin, and one longs to feel the warm soft breath of Theosophy ruffling its atmosphere and awakening its children to spirituality.

We left Geneva for Lyon on November 3rd. Lyon is intensely orthodox and Catholic, and as is ever the case under these conditions, there is a small minority fighting for its right to exist. The conditions being thus difficult,

and members of the opposing parties forming the audience at a public lecture, I was doubtful of its reception, but once more Theosophy triumphed by virtue of its inherent reasonableness and its pacific spirit.

At Marseille many were waiting to receive us, among others some members from Barcelona.

Nice. I leave this noble country—now in the grip of a persecuting materialism—with the hope, nestling warm in my heart, that Theosophy may yet bring her back to idealism and to a liberal and rational religion, and may thus preserve her in her place among the nations.

The morning of the 10th saw us once more in the train, on the way to Genoa. [The next three days were spent in visits to Milan and Turin]. Soon after 9 p.m. we were in the train which glided out of Turin station towards Brindisi. “We”—a constantly changing quantity—now consisted of Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, Mr. Macbean, the British Consul at Palermo, and myself. . . . At Brindisi we bade farewell to Mr. Macbean, and Wednesday morning saw us on board the stately “Morea,” crowded with travellers to the East and to Australia. It was the birthday of the T.S., November 17th, 1909. Thirty-four years of struggle and progress lie behind us; centuries of growth stretch in front of us. Thanksgivings to the Lords of Wisdom and Compassion, who have opened the way, rise from thousands of hearts today all the world over. May they continue to bless the work which They have planned.

28th November. A large crowd of members gave us a royal welcome on the platform [Madras], and, at Adyar, the household circle offered greeting in a prettily chanted



song And thus ended the journey of 37,176 miles of land and sea traversed between the parting in April and the welcome in November May the work done, offered at the Feet of the Holy Ones, serve Their good purpose for the world

Another Anniversary has come and gone, and the Annual Report of the Theosophical Society will go out to every subscriber to *The Theosophist* It tells of solid progress, of peace and prosperity, and letters from all parts of the world constantly confirm the reports of the Society's officers Here is one from France "Never before have we been so blessed, never before have we been so conscious of the guidance of the revered Masters, Who have radiated upon us such strength and life, preparing the ground ere you came among us, giving us so much through you as a channel, and so vivifying your work that this intensity of life remains with us since your departure "

The Convention opened on the 27th December, 1909, at Benares (*The Theosophist*, February 1910)

## 1910

The 11th January, 1910 [J Krishnamurti's birthday], was passed quietly, with much thought and solemn meditation A great peace brooded over the earth, and a deep solemn joy pervaded Adyar and Benares For all was well There were great rejoicings at Benares on the occasion of the Eleventh Anniversary of the Central Hindu College, on January, 18th, 19th and 20th The Girls' School led the way The children looked charmingly

pretty in the graceful Indian dress and with faces alight with joy. Miss Arundale and Miss Palmer were justifiably proud of their delightful pupils. The Boys' School and the College took up the 19th and 20th, and many visitors from outside Benares looked somewhat surprised at the size and extent of the buildings and the number of the students.

[At a meeting at Government House, on March 16th, on behalf of the Madras Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, H. E. Sir Arthur Lawley, Governor of Madras, spoke of Mrs. Besant in the following terms :

“ Indeed what can I add to the stirring words of Mrs. Besant's which we have just listened to? You know the quality of her matchless eloquence, and it needs no reminder from me to remind you that her voice is never raised save to move her hearers to some nobler impulse, to some loftier ideals, to some higher plane of thought. In the name of the Society I should like to thank her for the splendid address which she delivered to us, and I hope that it will not only stir the hearts, as it must have done, of every man and woman in this Hall, who heard it, but I hope that her voice will ring loud and clear far beyond the walls of this Hall, that it may move many and many a man and appeal to him to come in and help us in this great work.”

At Adyar on 17th March the foundation-stone of the new Students' Quarters—Leadbeater Chambers, the gift of our good friend Mr. C. R. Harvey—was well and truly laid with due Masonic Rites by the Very Illustrious Sister Annie Besant, 33°. It was at 11 o'clock in the morning



At Headquarters all goes well. A large contingent of friends from Benares will be coming this month, to spend a part of the C. H. C. vacation. It is right that Adyar and Benares should be linked together, and each visitor from one to the other helps to spin the web of love and sympathy which makes us strong in unity.

Your faithful servant,

ANNIE BESANT,

*President of the Theosophical Society.*

May 6th, 1910. Death of Edward VII.

White Lotus Day . . . was duly observed at Headquarters, but the usually joyous and grateful memory of our workers beyond the veil was slightly shadowed by the shock of the King's sudden death.

I left Adyar for a T. S. District Conference on June 16th; it was held at Periyakulam, a small town at the foot of the southern hills, twenty-seven miles away from the nearest railway station. It was reached by motor-bus, and we rolled through very pretty country, much admired by the country people, to whom the clumsy vehicle, without apparent means of motion, is still a curiosity.

Not many lectures are given in the summer season, but some of our Federations hold their gatherings, and had the pleasure of presiding at the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Central Districts' Theosophical Federation, held year on August 19th to 22nd at Madanapalle, a pleasant hill-resort, eight miles from any railway station. . . strange, and in a way pathetic spectacle greeted us at Vayalpad, the station before the one at which we

down The whole village, apparently, men, women, and children, had crowded into the station What they thought I know not, but they came with flowers with coconuts, with lemons, with betel-leaves a surging mass of human beings all bent on seeing on touching, the woman whom, in some dim way they must have looked on as a religious teacher In the hurly-burly a kind of way was made for the women and children first old withered grand-dames and girls, caste and no caste all mixed in wild confusion, with smiling lips rapt eyes and gentle clinging touch Hard was it to persuade them to stand back when at last the train must needs go on Ah! the strange depths of devotion in these simple village-folk so easily roused, so swiftly given so widely impulsive so confidently trustful What a wealth of love is here waiting for a worthy object of devotion

Madanapalle Lodge is a very old one, and has records of old times I saw the first form of diploma of Colonel Olcott's Hindu Boys Association, and the first number of the *Arya Bala Bodhini* the parent of the C H C Magazine The most marked feature of these gatherings has been the extraordinary enthusiasm of the women They crowded in old and young, and would not be gainsaid Would that India had a common vernacular, by which her women could be reached! If the Theosophical Society wins the women, it wins India, and not only the English-educated class

Five of us—Mrs van Hook and her son, my two Indian wards and myself—left dear Adyar behind us on the evening of September 25th, and steamed out of Madras

by the mail for Calcutta. Kind friends brought us milk and fruit on the way, and we travelled pleasantly through the green rain-drenched districts. . . . At Benares . . . hundreds crowded, scattering flowers like Devas and hurraing like Englishmen, and we were borne along to our carriages, and slowly drove to Shanti Kunja, escorted by, apparently, the whole College and School. Very prettily decorated by loving hands was my dear old home, and, by some miracle of ingenuity wrought by Miss Arundale, we were packed into it. . . . A great festivity was planned for October 1st, and began the evening before with the clever staging and acting by the students of a Bengali and a Hindi play. On the 1st, we began with a meeting in Shanti Kunja itself, where a little shrine-room was dedicated in the Names of Those we serve, and very gracious was the influence which filled it in swift response. . . . In the College Hall we gathered in the afternoon, and many loving words were spoken by professors, masters, boys and girls. . . . Here I spoke on making Truth, Courage and Reverence our ideal of life. After a fortnight's stay in Benares, Saharanpur, Jullundhar, Lahore, Delhi, Agra and Cawnpore are to be visited, and then follows another fortnight in Benares. H. E. the Viceroy and Lady Minto visit the College on the 10th November, and on the 14th is a Special Meeting of the Board. After that we return to Adyar. . . .

At last the long-promised visit of H. E. the Viceroy to the Central Hindu College has been made, and the function was a great success, despite the difficulties caused by the unseasonable weather.

This December will ever remain notable in our annals for the publication of the first work of Alcyone, our dear Brother Krishnamurti, who has written out with great care and perfect accuracy the teachings he received from his Master, the blessed K H., when He was preparing His pupil for Initiation. The booklet is entitled *At the Feet of the Master*, and contains His teaching on the Qualifications for Discipleship. It will be ready at Convention.

The Convention of 1910 is over, and a worthy ending to this memorable year. We turn our faces away from the past to face hopefully the future. O Young Year, whatever you may bring us may the record of each of us, when you are dying, be not wholly unworthy of our present hopes.

### 1911

*Headquarters Notes.* At the moment of writing I am not at Headquarters but in Rangoon, so the above is somewhat of a misnomer. A large party of us—Miss Arundale, Miss Willson, Mrs. Van Hook and her son, M. Blech, Mr. Leadbeater, our two young Indian charges and myself—accompanied by a returning Rangoon member, Mrs. Hamilton, boarded the good ship "Gwalior" and started for Rangoon on January 12th. We landed about 8 a.m. on January 16th, a number of the Rangoon members having come on board much earlier, and they took possession of ourselves and our boxes—boxes for nine travellers!—and saved us all trouble. The audiences in Rangoon have been very satisfactory as to numbers. The

*Rangoon Times* had a very fine report of the lecture on the "Law of Action and Re-action"—the Editor, Mr. Channing Arnold, son of Sir Edwin Arnold, was in the chair. It was pleasant to find the son of the author of "*The Light of Asia*" . . . showing the same leanings as marked his famous father. . . .

We visited Moulmein on the 25th. On February 1st we start northwards and are to visit Meiktila, Mandalay and Maymyo—the last named town being on the hills, and very cold, it is said. We leave for Madras on the 10th. A pleasant feature of the Rangoon visit was some friendly chats with Bhikku Ananda Metteya, a learned Buddhist monk, a Scot by birth. It was he who led the Buddhist mission to England a year or two ago, and founded the Buddhist Society there. We arrived at Madras on February 14th, and found ourselves to our great content, in Adyar once more.

Once more on the tramp, leaving fair Adyar for Calcutta, Benares, Bombay and Europe. . . . From Calcutta to Benares, my dear home of many years, where a few weeks will be spent in the work of the C. H. C., and in doing any service I may to that much loved institution. And then to Bombay for a brief visit, and into the ship that is to carry us away from "the Motherland of my Master." The heart always feels a pang as the dear shores of India melt away into the distance, sinking 'neath the horizon of the sea. Yet where His work calls, the disciple gladly answers, for what is life worth save as spent in doing His will, and serving His purpose?



April 22nd Bombay gave us a noble farewell and we passed through the entrance to the pier amid a chorus of good-byes from a large crowd of friends. The passengers requested a lecture between Bombay and Aden and I spoke on Reincarnation and so gave rise to many questions during the remainder of the voyage.

12th May London So now we are established for a time in England and are settling down to work. Alcyone and Mizar are with me at Miss Bright's. A generous friend has put a motor-car at my service for three months—an immense boon in this city of huge distances.

The air is full of the preparations for the Coronation and we are fortunate enough to have had given to us some seats in Whitehall—a splendid position for seeing the procession.

28th May London The large Memorial Hall Farringdon Street was well filled on May 26th for the meeting of the Fabian Society which I addressed on the subject

England and India. Mrs. Sidney Webb presided. A good many questions followed the lecture and a pleasant evening was spent.

Paris June 12th to 17th We are all astonished by the wonderful success of the Sorbonne lecture—the vast amphitheatre was packed in every corner and standing crowds filled the passages—some 4 000 in all—we came through hundreds who it seems, could not succeed in gaining admission. It was a wonderful sight for the hall is magnificent, it is semi-circular, the roof a single immense arch so that the auditors are packed tier after tier, and present one sea of faces to the speaker. Two

large galleries carry the crowd up to the very roof. The lecture "The Message of Giordano Bruno to the Modern World," roused the enthusiasm of the audience. . . . It was a remarkable audience—Ministers of State, men of science, professors, priests—men predominating over women. That such a gathering was possible shows how successful has been the work of the General Secretary and his co-adjutors through the long years of chill and darkness.

London. Very wonderful was the Coronation Day, June 22nd, 1911. We were fortunate enough to receive invitations to the Admiralty Stand, so we saw the great procession both on its way to the Abbey and on its return. The prettiest thing was the carriage full of the Royal children, smiling and happy. . . . The most interesting thing was the change wrought by the sacring and crowning on the persons of the King and Queen, from whom radiated a light not present before the ceremony, imparted by the consecration which made him King "by the Grace of God," not only by Act of Parliament.

The Convention of the T. S. in England held its business meeting on July 8th, in Kensington Town Hall. . . . The out-going Secretary, Mrs. Sharpe, had a rather uncomfortable half hour in listening to the warm praises so deservedly showered upon her. . . . The new General Secretary, Mr. Wedgwood, has thus happily entered on his first year of office. Nothing could have been in better taste than his speech of recognition of his predecessor's work, and of hope that he might worthily bear the burden that has been placed on his shoulders. We all

join in wishing him strength, peace and prosperity, for the work is great and demands great devotion and ability, but greater yet are the forces poured through the worthy channel

My lecturing work is over, and I am now in the country, finishing up odds and ends, before going in for the book—*Man Whence, How and Whither*

[Mrs Besant's last work before she left England was to lay the foundation-stone of the Headquarters of the English Section, on September 3rd (This building is now the property of The British Medical Association)]

It would be nice if Headquarters and Benares were nearer together, one has to spend three nights and two days in the train, to travel from one to the other to say nothing of the rupees demanded for the transit. This has been impressed on me very strongly during the last month, for the Hindu University work called me north to Benares on October 17th, and October 31st saw me once more on the railroad voyaging south to Madras. Benares and Adyar are the two poles of our Indian work and between them thrills the current of love and hope. Benares was my first Indian home and it remains very dear to my heart, with many a glad and sacred memory, through which runs the golden thread of spiritual aspiration and spiritual life. And Benares is to become a University town, for there the Hindu University is to rear its stately head.

We had a pleasant gathering at Headquarters on Foundation Day, November 17th, in celebration of the thirty-sixth birthday of the Theosophical Society. An atmosphere of peace surrounded all, and the benediction

of the great Presences fell softly on receptive hearts. How our outer Founders rejoice over the growth of the great tree which has sprung from the tiny seed planted in New York on November 17th, 1875 !

Headquarters has transferred itself almost bodily to Benares where the Thirty-sixth Anniversary of the Theosophical Society and the Convention of the Indian Section are being held. . . . To celebrate Their Imperial Majesties' Coronation Durbar the College and Headquarters at Benares were illuminated in the ancient way with tiny earthen lamps ; the outlining of buildings with these shining points of light is one of the most artistic and effective methods of decoration. . . .

## 1912

January 1st, 1912, is upon us. "A Happy and Useful New Year" is the wish of *The Theosophist* to its thousands of readers, scattered all over the civilised world. . . .

From Aden

A large number of affectionate friends met us at Bombay on February 3rd, and after covering us with garlands, conveyed ourselves and our belongings to the Ballard Pier. There we, perforce, had to bid them farewell, and walked away, a little party of four—C. Jinarajadasa, Krishnamurti, Nityananda and myself—to the P. and O. launch awaiting us. Across to the pretty, white "Salsette" we steamed, with the golden cock on her bows, proclaiming to all that she held the record for

speed There, Mrs Charles Kerr welcomed us, and soon we were dancing on the sunlit sea, leaving dear India behind us

In the Red Sea

As usual, there was a lecture on board on the way to Aden. I spoke on "The Meaning of Theosophy," and one, at least, of the audience is now at work on a Theosophical book. We reached Aden on the 7th February and there also a lecture had been arranged

London, February 23

Once more in England and in London, under weeping skies and a murky atmosphere, but with snow-drops ringing their fairy bells and yellow daffodils nodding gaily

The Mediterranean did not treat us very nicely as we crossed from Port Said to Brindisi in the little "Isis" but we arrived in good time and had the pleasure of a few hours with Mr Leadbeater and Mr Macbean

London Very warm were the greetings if the weather was cold, and we [are now] in Mrs Bright's ever hospitable home

A big programme for March has been planned out and even before "March comes in like a lion" February demands fitting toll

The first Sunday morning meeting at the Large Queen's Hall was a great success, a picture of the crowded orchestra with myself in front appeared in the *Graphic* and in the *Christian Commonwealth*. The *Graphic* had a very kindly notice

Tuesday found us all at Cambridge. On Wednesday I addressed the London Lodges and Thursday belonged to Coventry.

April 8th, 1912

Since my last notes written in London, I have again become a vagrant. April 4th saw us—"us" being Lady Emily Lutyens, her son Robert and myself—leaving Charing Cross Station for Paris, Mr. Wedgood, the General Secretary, very kindly escorting us as far as Dover. The passage across the Strait was very swift, though not smooth, and we were soon in the "Rapide" for Paris. A large crowd welcomed us, and on the same evening there was a big gathering of members of the E. S. . . . At a meeting on the following afternoon no less than three General Secretaries—those of France, French Switzerland, and Belgium were on the platform. . . . A crowd bade farewell to us at Paris on April 5th and a crowd bade us welcome at Turin on April 6th; only the country and the language had changed; the warm Theosophical hearts were beating with the same love.

I am working hard—hidden away in a village of the Kingdom of Italy—at the promised book, *Man: Whence, How and Whither*. Two months should see it finished, so far as writing is concerned, and already the Vasanta Press has received a consignment of the MS. It is difficult but pleasant work.

I am very glad to be at last free to say what we have been doing for the last few months. I was obliged to seek a certain seclusion, in order to carry out a piece of occult work of vital importance, and could not, consistently with my

duty. give any explanation until it was over      Sicily is one of the fairest islands of the world, and Taormina is perhaps its fairest spot      Behind it towers a great cliff, crowned with the ruins of an old Acropolis      and of a Greek temple, and a fragment still remains on which once stood Pythagoras, teaching the Greeks of the colony of Naxos      Close to the spot hallowed by his feet is buried one of the talismans planted in Europe by Apollonius of Tyana, one of the seven centres of occult force made by him for future use in direct connection with the Mighty One who wields the five-rayed Vajra      It was not strange therefore that we should be guided thither for three months of secluded life for labour which should add new strength to the Theosophical Society

I lectured on June 23rd at the University of Palermo, on Giordano Bruno and his philosophy and the audience proved to be a most satisfactory one, became deeply interested, and finally warmly enthusiastic

July 13th      Opening of the English Convention      No less than seven General Secretaries were present      We had thus practically a European Congress      The feeling [aroused at the Convention] is well voiced in the following letter

“We have gone back—many of us to lives of great stress and difficulty—with our hearts uplifted, and a firmer determination to grow and become strong, and fit to enter the Path you point out to us ”

Mr Leadbeater has taken his passage home to Adyar, and will arrive a day after myself      My two wards, whom I brought with me to England with their father's consent,

remain to prosecute their studies for the University under their tutors. I have placed them in the care of the widow of the Right Hon. Jacob Bright, M.P.: one of the Privy Councillors of the late Queen-Empress Victoria, and of her daughter, very old friends of mine.

We bade farewell on August 23rd to a large crowd of well-wishers at Charing Cross Station, the General Secretaries of England and Scotland, and Miss Green of Southampton kindly accompanying Miss Stewart and myself to Dover. Their affectionate farewell is the last memory of England. . . . At Turin another crowd greeted us; here Mr. Leadbeater and Mr. Hodgson-Smith joined us; and travelled with us to Alessandria, a pleasant interlude of happy converse. . . .

A very warm welcome awaited us at Bombay; after depositing our luggage at the station, we were driven to the Gaiety Theatre, where the Bombay Theosophists were gathered in force, and whither some had come from other towns.

Benares. Thanks, loving and grateful thanks, to all friends, far and near, who sent me birthday greetings on the sixty-fifth anniversary of my birth. October 1st was a very full day at Benares. The celebrations began at 7.20 a.m. with a gathering round the Sarasvati Temple in the College quadrangle, to which I was escorted by the cadet corps, and passages from the scriptures of the Hindus, Jains, Zoroastrians, Buddhists—in Pali, Chinese, Tibetan and Japanese—Christians, Musalmans, Sikhs, were read by members of the respective faiths; there is something strangely impressive and beautiful in such a ceremony, so



fitting for the celebration of the birthday of the President of the U. S. the world-wide Society embracing members of all faiths. On October 7th I started early for Coimbatore, and lectured there in the evening to a big audience on the Hindu University.

A suit has been filed against me to deprive me of the guardianship of my wards. The plaint was lodged on the 24th October and handed to me on the 25th. On November 6th I filed my written statement in answer. The Victoria Hall [Madras] was packed each Sunday for my lectures, and hundreds of people were shut out and went away disappointed. We sold some reserved seats for the three lectures, and after paying the expenses, we forwarded the Surplus to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

The Anniversary celebration began on December 26th, but members had been pouring into Aoyar for a full week previously. At 5.30 Mr. George Arundale delivered the opening lecture of the Convention on 'Education as Service' to an audience estimated at 2,500 by the Madras Mail. The great banyan-tree was the Hall, and its far-reaching branches the roof, the down-reaching roots, struck into the ground, were the pillars while the red sky dyed by the setting sun gleamed rosily through the green leaves, and was as the coloured windows.

There was a delightful sense of freedom and harmony present throughout the Convention. The blessing of the true Heads of the Society manifestly brooded over it, and all was peace. May that Peace of the Masters go with the members to their homes.

1913

With the New Year we re-name our Adyar publishing business. "The Theosophist Office" is not a good description of the rapidly growing business we carry on. Henceforth we take the name: "The Theosophical Publishing House."

In consequence of the legal action taken against me, I have thought it well, for the sake of the public repute of the Theosophical Society, to enter more than I have hitherto done into the social life of Madras. Busy with other work, I have shrunk from public functions and have refused private invitations. But I find that the T.S. suffers from this abstention, which is regarded as eccentric, so, as President, I have this year acted differently, and while I shall continue to keep outside the circle of mere social gaieties, I shall appear at such gatherings as belong to what may be called the public social life of the City. Government House invitations I have accepted, since H.E. the Governor represents the Crown, and all honour and respect are due to our Rulers; and this year, being in Madras, I went to a Garden Party there to meet the Royal Commission, and also to a State Reception. Several residents at Adyar also attended these functions by invitation. . . . Further I attended the Annual Meeting of the Society for the Protection of Children, presided over by H.E. the Governor, and made a speech which has been fully reported.

The large banyan-tree in Blavatsky Gardens is serving as a delightful spot for a series of Sunday afternoon teas. Mrs. Kerr, Mme. Blech, and Miss Stuart have been hostesses on successive Sundays, and the beauty of the

surroundings and the friendly informality of the gatherings have been much appreciated both by residents and guests from outside

We all gave a tea-party to Mr Leadbeater on his birthday, February 17th, on which day he completed the 66 years of his stay on earth this time. Few in the outer world realise how deeply the men and women among whom he lives appreciate his noble, saintly, and most useful life. The last two Theosophical banyan-teas were held on March 2nd and 9th. We shall resume these meetings in the autumn, as they draw some of the nicer and more thoughtful people from Madras, and bring them into touch with the Society.

On April 20th, the residents at Adyar—or rather, all that were left, as many have already fled from the Madras heat—invited me to tea under our favourite banyan-tree, and the veteran Dr. English read the following kind words:

Dear and Revered Madam

We, the undersigned residents of Adyar, beg to put on record our appreciation of your valiant defence, in the High Court, of our respected teacher, Mr. Leadbeater, and our beloved Krishnamurti.

The Judgment upholds the fair name of our Society, and we congratulate you on that brilliant success, and feel thankful to the Great Ones that you are our Leader.

We wish you further success in the Appeal that is pending.

We remain,  
Dear and Revered Madam,  
Your faithful followers,

Sixty-three names follow—those of all the residents now here. I notice that the Madras papers are beginning to publish resolutions sent in by Theosophical Lodges and Federations, declaring their thankfulness for the clearing of our two Brothers from false accusations and their steadfast support of myself.

[On May 17th Mrs. Besant left Bombay for London.]

The Large Queen's Hall was packed on June 1st, and our readers will find elsewhere in our pages [*The Theosophist*] the comment of the *Christian Commonwealth* on the meeting. It is satisfactory to find that the cruel slanders of some of the Indian papers have not in any way affected English public opinion. It has been a relief to escape even for so brief a space from the poisoned atmosphere of Madras into the cleaner air of English public life, and to be treated once more as a human being.

The British Association for the Abolition of Vivisection held a crowded meeting in the Kensington Town Hall on June 5th, Lord Channing in the chair. I was one of those who had the privilege of once again lifting up their voices against the crime of cruelty sheltered under the name of science.

June 14th to 18th. The Theosophical European Federation held a most successful Congress at Stockholm, at which all the General Secretaries of the European National Societies were present. The enthusiasm and the joyfulness of the Congress were extraordinary, and the T.S. in Europe stands absolutely solid.

[On June 23rd Mrs. Besant left Europe for India.]

July 3rd The weather has treated us well and we had calm seas, except for a slight monsoonish ruffling between Aden and Bombay. Even the monsoon has been kind to us and our steamer, the Delta, has been very steady. Tomorrow morning will see the shores of India rise above the horizon. In spite of the legal troubles, it is very delightful to breathe Indian air once more, and to see on every side the Indian faces which, whether their owners be known or unknown to me, pull at my heart-strings whenever I see them. When, as part of the defence of the T S and of my two dear boys, I began the other suits, I did not realise how much of personal pain would be involved in the mere fact that they would bring me into conflict with Indians, and now that the T S has been cleared and only personal questions as to myself remain, I care nothing for success in them, for it would only be a personal triumph, and a triumph over people who belong to the race that for twenty years I have tried to serve.

[August and September were spent chiefly in attending the High Court proceedings *re* the suit of the father of her wards.]

October 1st Birthday Message to Theosophical friends

My word to all those who love me is

“Be strong, be brave, be true”

Let us have that as our motto for the coming year

It is pleasant to announce that the legal pressure is so far relaxed as to enable me to take up again some of my other work, and I have been able to arrange for a course

of eight lectures on Social Reform, at which the Chair is to be taken by various leading public men in Madras. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, October).

October 18th to 22nd were given to work outside Madras, in Madura and Trichinopoly. Madura was in festive array for our welcoming—four of us came from Madras, leaving immediately after Friday's lecture—we found ourselves pacing slowly behind a stately temple elephant and temple umbrella held high in the air, while a band poured out joyous music, and crowds lined the road and made a procession, escorting us to the gaily decorated bungalow wherein we were housed. . . . I paid a visit to the Political Conference by official invitation and supported the resolution praying the University of Madras to include a vernacular in the Arts Degree Examination. On October 20th I gave an address to students on "Your Duties in the Future"; as the name implies, it dealt with the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in an India growing into freedom. This ended the work in Madura and we took ourselves to Trichinopoly. In the main street of that town we were met by a great concourse of people, with an elephant, a camel—who looked on the proceedings with much superciliousness—a band, and brilliant lights, and taken to the fine building erected by the Trichinopoly Lodge; of this I had laid the foundation-stone in 1908, and now came to open it. . . . A public lecture on "Education in the Light of Theosophy" was given in the open air, the Hall being quite inadequate to accommodate the huge audience.

Their Excellencies The Viceroy and Lady Hardinge have come to Madras and have gone from it. Some of

the Aiyar residents were present at all the functions. Personally I attended the Laying of the Foundation-stone of the new University Library on the invitation of the Senate of the University of Madras and the State Reception at Government House.

Friends in various parts of the world having asked me to write on the cases in the Law-Courts I have done so. But as they are now closed with the exception of possible proceedings for contempt, so far as India is concerned, I do not propose to say anything more on them in our journals. I prefer to go into 1914 dropping all the unpleasant memories of 1911-1913.

#### 1914

1913 lies behind us. All thanks be to the High Gods therefor. A painful year and an evil it has been and no tears fall upon its grave. Let us bury it joyfully and with it bury all memories that speak of strife.

The first number of our new weekly *The Commonwealth*, goes forth amid good omens. A very warm welcome has been extended to it as filling a much-needed want, and quite a respectable list of subscribers is already filed. The first number contains an editorial 'Our Policy' which outlines the aims of the journal and we trust to be able to fill them gradually. (*The Theosophist* January)

The chief characteristic of our Convention [December 1913], held at Benares, was a sober triumphant joy, only clouded now and again for a moment when the danger of imprisonment for the leaders made the quick tears rise.

But even in the face of that, there was the feeling that all was well, since the Divine Ones guide the destinies of man.

The Watch-Tower is being transplanted to Europe while these lines are passing through the press, and will be fixed in London for a short time. (*The Theosophist*, May).

3rd April. Once more at the "Gate of India," the splendid city of Bombay. . . . The Gaiety Theatre was crowded for a lecture on "National Education." Two valuable gifts to the Adyar Library were a pleasant preliminary to the lecture, one from a Brahmana, the other from a Parsi. . . . In a few hours I step on board the good steamer *Mantua*, and say good-bye for a short time to India, "the Motherland of my Master," sacred and beloved. Then, for a space, to dwell among the many dear and loving friends whom good karma has linked me with under other skies and among other scenes. How good it is to know that, in all lands, we who are the servants of the Holy Ones form but one family, whatever may be our outer differences of birth and colour—fair augury of that happier day for earth when brotherhood shall transcend all differences, and when mutual love and mutual respect shall bind into unity the many varying types of the children of men.

London, May 7th.

A crowd of some three hundred people had gathered at Charing Cross to meet the party from Dover. Mr. Graham Pole had met me at Brindisi, we picked up M. Blech at Amiens, and Messrs. Davis and Hodgson Smith and Christie at Calais. . . .

8th May. In the evening there was a crowded meeting of welcome at the Chelsea Town Hall, restricted to members



of the Society The Vice-President, Mr A P Sinnett, presided, and made a charming speech On Sunday we began with a meeting, and at luncheon and afternoon tea welcomed many friends, from abroad as well as from various parts of England Monday, the day fixed for the hearing of the appeal, came all too soon

White Lotus Day was kept in London as usual, the temporary building in Tavistock Square being gay with flowers, and warm loving hearts As I had another meeting to attend, my speech was placed first on the programme, later, Miss Arundale and Mr D N Dunlop were the chosen readers

May 9th found me at Cheltenham in connection with the Southern Federation After tea I lectured on Theosophy to a crowded meeting in the Town Hall, and I have never addressed a more attentive and appreciative audience Business filled the next few days Saturday, May 16th, found Lady Emily Lutyens and myself at Sheffield, whither we went to take part in the Northern Federation meeting I could only give an afternoon lecture, as the Sunday Queen's Hall (London) meetings began next day, but it was pleasant to meet for even so short a time many sturdy northern friends On May 20th, five of us left England for Paris—Mr Graham Pole, Mr Wedgwood, Mr Banks, Mr Krishnamurti, and myself Many had come from the provinces and from Switzerland, Holland, Belgium and Russia, and every one seemed to be very happy, full of enthusiasm and vitality Tomorrow I hope to breakfast with the founders of Co-Freemasonry, to lecture on "L'individuation et l'origine du karma

individuel," and with the help of some of the founders of the Supreme Temple of the Rosy Cross, to consecrate a Grand Temple for France. The following day will see us travelling back to England.

On June 18th, I lectured to the Philosophical Circle of the Lyceum Club on "The Yoga Philosophy," and found a crowded and deeply interested audience. . . . It is delightful to see the welcome given to Hindu philosophy by cultured and highly educated people in England. . . . Twelve lectures in ten days, with journeys to Brighton and Folkestone, is not a bad record of work.

Aden, July 5th.

The last few days in England were very full. Meetings of the Temple of the Rosy Cross and of the T.S. Executive; a lecture on the Woman Question at the Queen's Hall, a Brotherhood of the Arts Meeting . . . a meeting with the haggard builders, gaunt with starvation, but glad at heart to be again at work; interviews with the Editor of *The Review of Reviews*, brave W. T. Stead's son and successor, and with the Editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, with some of my best lieutenants on work to be carried out; and as a final item, a talk with an East End magistrate over a proposed Children's Colony on a piece of land in Essex, generously given by him, and the forming of a little group of Trustees to administer it. Then a crowd at Charing Cross to say "Good-bye" and the swift journey to Dover, a calm voyage across the Channel, the racing across the Continent to Brindisi, with pleasant greetings of friends here and there, to find the "Persia" waiting for us, anchored outside the harbour, and so to dinner and bed.

HOME AGAIN, July 11th

I have bought—not with my own money!—*The Madras Standard*, a daily paper founded in 1841. It had been going downhill for a long time. The purchase was made at railway speed, but in the nick of time, for its first work has been to raise a protest against the acceptance of the Government proposals, conditioning the grant of a Charter to the proposed Hindu University

[Name of *Madras Standard* changed to *New India* and 1,100 copies printed      On August 15th, 5,000 copies printed]

Over the Empire the War-Clouds have broken into a furious deluge of European War. The Theosophical Society has members in all the countries involved, and its duty is to work for peace, and, while war lasts, to keep our sense of brotherhood unbroken despite the clash of arms. Our brotherhood is a spiritual reality, calm, deep, unruffled by the dissensions of minds and bodies. While I constantly and habitually plead for the substitution of arbitration for war, of justice for might, among nations as among individuals, I yet hold that war has its place in the evolution of humanity, and that humanity is not yet evolved enough for its total disappearance. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, August)

May I here (*The Adyar Bulletin*) pen a few words of thanks to those who have shown their love and trust by re-electing me as President of the Theosophical Society for another term of seven years? They know that that gratitude will seek to embody itself in service to the Society and to the world. For with the whole strength of my longing to serve the Elder Brothers above us, I realise that

that can only be achieved by the loving service of the younger brothers around us, and that the height to which we have risen is measured by the depth to which we can stoop.

October 1st, Birthday Message. "We are all inclined to think too much of our own importance in the work, and transplanting is as good for us as for seedlings."

Into our beautiful and peaceful Adyar the spectre of War has stalked. Our good and gentle Dr. Otto Schrader has been taken away by the military authorities and interned, with many other Germans. . . . Friends will be interested in hearing that the circulation of *New India* has now (October 11th) risen to 8,700 per day, and many numbers are out of print. We began on July 14th with 1,100. For India the above circulation is exceptional.

They that make the sword the arbitrament shall perish by the sword. The War Germany has provoked, as her road to Empire, shall crush her militarism, free her people, and usher in the reign of Peace.

Our Theosophical Convention in December was a very happy one. . . . The Convention Lectures were among the best which have been delivered, and they are being prepared for the press. . . . The lectures were listened to by enormous audiences, seated under our local Theosophical cathedral, the great Banyan-tree in Blavatsky Gardens. . . . We went back to our old hour of 8 a.m., so as not to clash with the meetings of the National Congress, held in Madras at the same time as our Convention. Many Congress delegates came to see the Society's home and its famous Library, and it was interesting

to hear that many had been struck by the sense of the pervading peace as they entered it

## 1915

To the lands reeling under the heavy losses of War, I cannot send the formal wish. 'A Happy New Year' But I can wish a noble New Year a useful New Year, to all who read these lines And so we turn to another year's work, ready to face whatever 1915 may have to bring Good or bad as the world may reckon its bringings, all are good to us steadfast in our confidence in the guidance of that world by the strong and tender hands of Those who are the Guardians and the Servants of Humanity (*The Adyar Bulletin* January)

This last week [March 20th-23rd] I went to Madura, among other things to unveil a portrait and a memorial tablet to Mr P Narayana Aiyar the man to whom, more than to any other, the progress of Theosophy in this leading city and district is due

The visit of Mr and Mrs Gandhi to Adyar was a very enjoyable one They visited one of our Panchama schools—the one in Urur, the village adjoining the Headquarters' grounds—and Mr Gandhi inspected our Vasanta Press with extreme interest, he has had printing experiences of his own in his settlement in South Africa, so went over the composing, printing and binding departments with a trained eye We had our party under the great Banyan-tree whose wide-spreading branches and columns form our lecture-hall and our reception-rooms Over two

hundred guests were present, and we were all very happy, for Adyar has an ever-friendly feeling, no differences of race and creed forming any barrier or constraint.

Our summer birds have flown from Adyar to Ootacamund, Coonoor and Kotagiri, the first the Government station, the other two pretty hill resorts which are rapidly rising into favour during the last few years. . . . I am going up for a week this month, to make acquaintance with "Ooty."

I paid an interesting visit to Kolhapur, the premier Mahratha State, to preside for three days over the Mahratha Theosophical Federation. The State is ruled over by a descendant of the famous Shivaji, the Warrior Chief of the Mahrathas, a name to conjure with in Maharashtra. We had a fine gathering of delegates from the District, and huge meetings. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, June).

Mr. A. P. Sinnett's booklet on *The Spiritual Powers and the War* shows that the President and the Vice-President of the Theosophical Society think alike on the "Powers behind the War." Those who have come through the study of Theosophy and through their personal contact with the Hierarchy which guides the destinies of Nations to understand the great facts which underlie the outward seemings, cannot but see in the tremendous conflict which is tearing the world in pieces the struggle between the forces which work for evolution and those which work against it. The "Lords of the Dark Face"—as the retarding forces are called in those wondrous Stanzas of the Book of Dzyan, familiar to all of us—are verily busy today upon this earth of ours, and although the crisis is not so

tremendous as that which ended in the whelming of Atlantis beneath the waves, yet, on a smaller scale the characteristics of that struggle are being reproduced in our own day

August Some dreams materialise Our daily paper, *New India*, is going on steadily and we have broken through a bad custom here of taking in a daily paper and letting the subscription fall into arrears ever increasing It is exercising a great influence and is helping to hew the road towards the realisation of the dream Our weekly *The Commonwealth* has a circle of readers composed of the leading men in the Indian political field I have begun a series of articles

How India Wrought for Freedom the story of the Congress during its thirty years of life drawn from its official records and believe that they will prove both useful and interesting They began on July 31st

September There is no break as yet in the dark cloud of War that lowers over Europe lit up only with flashes that herald the bursting of shells From every side comes grim news of unparalleled slaughter and the ablest scientific brains in each country are dedicated to the ghastly work of wrenching from Nature new ways of killing her children And what is the lesson that Humanity is to learn from this welter of horror and of death? Surely that Intellect unillumined by Love must ultimately bring our race to naught Knowledge and Love should walk hand-in-hand in evolution, for knowledge without love has no compass for its guiding and love without knowledge may become a destroying torrent instead of a fertilising stream Hence is Wisdom—the blending of Love and Knowledge—the highest achievement of the man who stands on the threshold of Immortality

October 1st, Birthday Message. "In a world crisis, such as we stand in today, weaklings are whirled away in the storm-wind, 'Quit you like men, be strong,' says an old writer. Thrown out into the world in young womanhood, I took as my motto: 'Be strong.' I pass it on to you today, in my age: BE STRONG."

. . . This pleasure taken in each other's society was a marked feature in the birthday party given to me by the Adyar residents, who invited also to it some Indian friends from Madras. . . . Let me here say a word of thanks to the innumerable friends all the world over who have sent letters and telegrams of good wishes for my 68th birthday. I strive to be worthy of the love and trust so lavishly poured out.

October. Some of my good friends wonder why I work in the political field, which for some years I left entirely. The answer must be a little bit of autobiography. I left it, because H. P. Blavatsky wished it. She thought, and thought rightly, that under the new conditions into which I entered when I became her pupil in the Divine Wisdom, it was necessary for me to devote myself to the mastering of the Theosophical standpoint, to the adjustment of the focus of the mental and emotional eyes to the new Light. Socialist as she declared herself to be—of the Socialism of Love and not of hate—she would not have me teach Socialism, until I had seen how, in the age-long evolution of mankind, the Socialism of child-peoples, under an autocracy of Wisdom and Love, had necessarily passed away—exquisitely beautiful and happiness-giving as it was—to make way for the struggles, the antagonisms, the wars, in which adolescent



Nations hewed their ways to Individualism and Self-reliance. In the old Pythagorean way, she imposed on me silence on the subjects I cared for most, to which my public life had been devoted. She did well. For my old crude views were thrown into the fire of silence, and nothing was lost of the gold that they contained, that remained. She had learned in the wild days of the French Revolution the danger of such views among a people starving and ignorant, and she knew that in silence wisdom grows.

Gradually, over here in India, I studied India's past, and learned how great had been her people's liberty in ancient days. In the early nineties I saw the Panchayat system at work, that I had read about, and found it wise. From time to time I gave a lecture on the problems of National life, and in England, now and again, I lectured on England's neglected duties to India, and on the place of coloured races in the Empire on their grievances, recalling old studies, when I had published a strong attack on England's dealings with India, the black story of Clive and Hastings, and the tyrannies and wrongs. Hotly had I written also on England and Afghanistan, protesting against the invasion and England's policy, against English policy in Egypt and towards Arabia. The study of those days remained, and laid the groundwork for the future. For all the love for India, and the sympathy with her wrongs, and the knowledge of her sufferings, of her awakening in the eighties, and her struggles, the work for her with Charles Bradlaugh, the meeting with the Congress deputation, and with Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji in his election fight—as he reminded me the other day—all this flowered when I first

touched Indian soil into the intense devotion for the Motherland which has animated me ever since. But all my first years of work went to the uplifting of eastern faiths, and especially of Hinduism—the work that had the honour of being condemned by Sir Valentine Chirol, as helping Nationalism—as indeed it did, for all great National movements in India are rooted in religion : as witness the religious movement before Shivaji and the Maratha Confederacy ; and the Brahmo-Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society, preparing the road for the National Movement, and the nourishing thereof by Svami Vivekananda. Then came the educational work, and the lectures to the Hindu College students, and the inspiring of them with Patriotism, with devotion to the Motherland, the experience of the treatment of my Indian friends by Anglo-Indians, the meeting with Mr. Gokhale, the sad Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon, the shock of Surat, the wrath of my Bengali friends over the Partition and my sympathy with them, the anarchical troubles, the saving of boys from the police, and so on and on, till I knew the time had come for letting my tongue speak freely that which had been burning in my heart, and to which all led up—the Freedom of the Motherland, and dignity of an Indian Nation self-ruled. —To have a share in the winning of that Freedom, a share however small—what greater gift could come into hands which fold themselves in the cry of homage : VANDE MATARAM.

It is interesting to note how the War has aroused interest in Theosophical ideas and its larger views of life. The *Evening Star* of Dunedin, New Zealand, reprints part of my Watch-Tower notes of August last, on the offering

by Britain and the Dominions of the most fit on the battle-fields, the draining away from the Nations of the best. The *Star* reprints all that follows of the work of the Manus. The message of Theosophy comes as a strong consolation, and its reasonableness recommends it, as it justifies the ways of God to men.

A second Christmas has passed in the midst of War. Maitreya! Christ! Compassionate and tender when will the harvest of men's lives be reaped and the karma of broken hearts be exhausted?

### 1916

January When this volume of *The Theosophist* shall close, shall we be within sight of the closing of the War? Some Yogis here in India put the ending in April but I know not whether they speak sooth or only guess as do others. For myself I have heard naught of an ending so far. The Theosophical Society's Convention held at Bombay—the first Convention outside Adyar and Benares—has been an unqualified success and has brought Theosophy to the knowledge of many as a world-wide and important movement. The four Convention Lectures delivered by myself were frankly propagandist, placing before the great crowd Theosophical teachings on God, Man, Right and Wrong and Brotherhood.

February Many and priceless are the lessons taught by these months of suspense and bloodshed, and we should read the passing events with keen eyes and quiet hearts.

As the area of the War spreads, as it seems likely to

do, more and more of our brethren will be flung against each other, to learn the invaluable lesson of "acting without attachment," of fulfilling to the uttermost the duty of the body, and of holding the mind and heart in peace despite the raging fires of hate that flame around.

March. I have been pretty busy lately in lecturing, in addition to the usual fairly heavy duties. A very full day was spent at Bangalore, whither I went to open a new building of a very useful Society which has been named after me, Shrimati Annavasanta Sangam; Besant becomes Basant in Bengal and Vasanta, the Spring, in Samskrit, so the name easily lends itself to local namings. On Wednesday [no date given] I went off to Sholapur to unveil a portrait of Mr. Gokhale, arriving there next day at noon. A visit to the large mills of Mr. Narottam Moraraji Goculdas, an ex-Sheriff of Bombay and one of our leading Bombay Theosophists, occupied a considerable time in the afternoon. . . . After work in the *New India* office all day, evening found me again in the train, this time for Kumbhakonam, where, with Mr. Wood, Hon. Secretary of the Theosophical Trust, I arrived to lay the foundation-stone of the new building for our girls' school there. . . . Then came another meeting, Theosophical. At 3, there were admissions to the T. S.; then a lecture to Indian ladies, laboriously translated sentence by sentence. Then admissions to the Order of the Sons and Daughters of India, and a crowded public lecture in the Town Hall, on "What India Wants." And so to the train again, to reach Madras next morning. I tell this little story as an illustration of the life of meditation which I am leading in the Himalayas,

according to Mr. Bottomley it may give my friends a little over the world a little idea of the varied activities of my Indian life.

April Watchman what of the fight? is the cry that is heard from many and many a breaking heart. For the Night is long and weary and thick clouds lower over the war-perced Nations. Not yet has the answer rung forth from the East whence cometh our help. For though we know that in the higher worlds the battle is won that the forces of evil are driven back and that their strength is broken yet the enemy though flung downwards is yet raging upon the earth knowing that his time is short.

And yet to those who know it is ever true that in the far White Island the Lord sitteth above the water-floods the Lord remaineth a King for ever. And as we lift up our eyes to the great Temple fairy-like in pure white radiance against the sapphire sky we see the Star we love shining ever as the Jewel in the Lotus and we murmur low, with the old Hebrew singer The Lord shall give strength unto His people The Lord shall give His people the blessing of Peace. How the riven Nations shall feel the joy of that blessing feel it as they have never felt it before — the blessing of Peace. (*The Theosophist*)

May The Theosophical Educational Trust not content with having started a Boys' College in Madanapalle is now starting a Girls' College in Benares. The new College will be affiliated to the Hindu University. The University admits men and women of all faiths, so we do not have to narrow our borders by entering the University fold.

It was a long, hot journey from Madras to Allahabad, where the All-India Congress Committee met in a three

days' session. There I had the pleasure of lecturing, in the beautiful garden of a leading Indian lawyer, the Hon. Pandit Motilal Nehru, at the inaugural meeting of the Allahabad Gokhale Society. . . . From Allahabad, I went to Benares as aforesaid, to meet old friends, and as it turned out, to start a Women's College. Thence to Calcutta, and from Calcutta to Dacca, in East Bengal, where I gave two lectures. one political, and the other on "The Value of Theosophy to India." Then back again to Calcutta by rail and steamer, and from Calcutta to Madras once more. But not for long, for having arrived here yesterday, May 6th, I start off again this evening for Palghat. (*The Adyar Bulletin*).

June. Times are stormy with me personally, just now, in connection with my Indian work, but no anxiety need be felt. My good Theosophical friends will forgive me if I state here (*Adyar Bulletin*) no particulars of my own personal troubles, for any true statement might be used against the Vasanta Press to hamper our religious work. I had a sharp attack of fever, due to exposure under unfavourable weather conditions at Poona, but am well again, and able to carry on my work quite comfortably.

August. My editorial chair is not a very secure one in these days of storm and stress, with menace from every side. I do not know from day to day, what my fate may be, and Dame Rumour assigns to me all sorts of unpleasant happenings. But, we who believe that Nations are guided along the path by which their ultimate good will be attained, or if their work is over, will be cast into the melting-pot to be purified and later refashioned on a nobler model, we

can look on the clashing tumult around us sure that ' the Lord sitteth above the water-floods

A curious and interesting question has arisen within our ranks Lord Willingdon the Governor of Bombay—who is trying to stamp out all political discussion in his Presidency has thought fit to exclude me from his Presidency It is within his power though not within his right He refuses to give any reason having none which will bear examination Members of the Theosophical Society naturally feel indignant, and it was suggested that a resolution of protest should be circulated to be passed by the Lodges and sent to the Governor of Bombay Unfortunately this was done without any consultation with myself the President of the Society The moment the news reached me I put into the *New India* of that day the following paragraph

### THEOSOPHICAL LODGES

No Theosophical Lodge must pass any resolution with regard to my exclusion from the Bombay Presidency, nor in support of me in any political difficulty with the Government The T S has no politics and a large number of our Fellows are Government servants Any such resolution passed by a Lodge is unconstitutional and wholly against my wishes

ANNIE BESANT,

President of the Theosophical Society  
(*The Adyar Bulletin*, August)

September In the course of a long life, I have never seen the clouds so thick as they are today They enshroud Christendom in darkness, and mark the failure of Christian

civilisation. For the so-called Christian countries have wholly disregarded the teachings of the Christ ; strength, which He said should be used for service, has been used for oppression, the poverty of the masses in the great cities is terrible, and the competitive system, the creation of Christian civilisation, has divided each Christian Nation into two classes, the rich and the poor, multi-millionaires at the head of the one and paupers at the base of the other. Out of this has been born the Socialism of hatred, with its illegitimate offspring, Anarchism. (*The Theosophist*).

October 1st Birthday Message. "Hail, Brothers ! You who, in the midst of the darkest night, believe in the Dawn."

Another year of our *Theosophist* lies behind us ; another year of our *Theosophist* opens before us, our Thirty-eighth volume. Thirty-seven years of unbroken succession have passed over us. How many lie in front, who can tell ? For the times are stormy, and difficulties are many ; our press is under heavy security, and I know not if it will be shut down, for I am not a prophet, nor can I forecast the incalculable. I do not know for what reason the security has been imposed, for the Executive gives no reasons. I have not received a warning of any kind, during my eight years of work, so I have nothing to guide me as to the wishes or the objections of the Executive. I am groping entirely in the dark. But in order to protect the press as much as I can, I have set up a new press in Madras, and have removed thither the *Commonweal* and all political pamphlets, leaving nothing for the Vasanta Press but purely religious and social publications.





Theosophical Convention was much approved. We had a fine pandal, holding, when crowded, some four thousand people, and it was packed to the uttermost for the Convention Lectures. (*The Theosophist*, January).

1917

The storm-clouds are very heavy, hanging now over the whole world, for the United States have been drawn to the very edge of the War-zone, and are ringing with the preparations for War. Three years of unparalleled bloodshed and devastation will have told their piteous tale by August, 1917, and still the Allies have to rest on Hope, for the solid gains are with the Central Powers, save for the lost Colonies of Germany. Those seem of little account beside the territory she has won in Europe, territory soaked in blood alike of the Allies and of the Central Powers. . . . When peace comes, as come it must some day, the countries will be fronting problems harder perhaps to solve than those of men and munitions. . . . The old civilization is hopelessly shattered and can never be rebuilt. . . . It is a new civilization which has to be created, not an old one which only needs to be repaired. Mr. Bonar Law spoke of reconstructing the Empire while the metal is red-hot. Truly that is necessary. But it is more than an Empire which has to be forged ; it is a new world which has to be created. . . . Let us realise that, for the present, the time for study is over, and the time for utilising the results of our study is here. Let us apply the principles of Theosophy to the problems of the coming





ANNIE BESANT IN 1917

times, and seek to understand how karma reincarnation and brotherhood must be our guides in preparing for the New Era. February opened badly with the declaration by Germany of war against the world at large quickly answered by the United States with rupture of diplomatic relations.

Very sharp is the lesson which is being taught to the modern world that intellect unilluminated by love may at any moment tend to bring misery rather than happiness to the world of men. Shall we have learned our lesson? Shall we have learned that love is higher than intellect and that brotherhood is worth more than knowledge? Shall we have learned that sympathy and compassion and gentleness are more to be prized than power and strength and genius, that power is only to be revered when it protects the helpless, that strength is only noble when it is dedicated to the service of weakness, that genius is only divine when it uplifts and gladdens the younger brothers of the human families? Unless the War has taught lessons such as these, the crumbled civilisation of the West will rise again only to perish under the new shocks of disregarded law. (*Theosophist and Bulletin*, February-March)

This month March sees changes in London in the ownership of the Theosophical Publishing Society. The lease of 161 New Bond Street runs out this month, and some years ago Mr Bertram Keightley and myself resolved to dissolve our partnership when the lease came to an end. I am to carry on the business alone. The name, Theosophical Publishing Society, will be changed to Theosophical Publishing House, as the word "Society" causes some confusion, and the business is now so registered.

The Full Moon of Chaitra—this year falling on the 7th of April—is a date dear to Occultists, and it was therefore chosen for the establishing of a Community that may be the seed of a spreading tree. . . . The Community takes the name of the “Order of the Brothers of Service,” and as it grows in size, the Brothers will be grouped according to their special capacities for usefulness, a teaching group being first formed, because we have such a nucleus, already gathered round Mr. Arundale, old C. H. C. boys, who have taken their degrees at the Universities of Allahabad or of Cambridge, and the latter of whom have returned to India, ready to serve in any place in which they can be useful. Anyone who becomes a Brother of the Order puts his personal property into the Brotherhood, and takes from it a subsistence allowance only. Entrance to it hereafter, in all but exceptional cases of persons of long tried devotion and capacity, will be preceded by three years of study and training, and at the end of these, if the candidate proves to be suitable and capable of good work, he will be admitted to the Brotherhood. (*Bulletin*).

Ladies' meetings are now the order of the day almost wherever I go. . . . The women of India will become a great uplifting force as the old spirit revives in them.

#### THE INTERNMENT

[*The Theosophist*. (Since the Order of Internment served by the Government of Madras prohibits Mrs. Annie Besant from publishing any writing of hers, these Watch-Tower notes are not contributed by her, but by various writers.) June. On the 16th of this month the Madras Government served Orders of internment, signed June 7th, on the

President, Mr G S Arundale, and Mr B P Wadia

In consequence of this Order, the President left on the 21st, and Mr Arundale and Mr Wadia on the 22nd, for their place of internment which is Ootacamund, in the Nilgiri Hills. They will reside at ' Gulistan ' the little cottage which the late President-Founder built many years ago. One clause of the Order deals with correspondence, and prohibits our interned leaders from receiving or sending any " letter, telegram or other written communication unless it has first been examined by the District Magistrate

In order that the routine work of the T S at Adyar may proceed normally The Executive Committee will carry on the administrative work as usual the President during her internment being personally represented by Mr Jinarajadasa, who becomes Acting Editor of *The Theosophist* and *The Adyar Bulletin*

August *The Adyar Bulletin* Members all over the world will hear with deep regret that the enforced retirement of the President from active work has produced a severe nervous strain which has resulted in great physical prostration. For the first time in thirty-four years she has been out of public life, and the shock has been more severe than the President herself or any of us anticipated. It is scarcely possible to hope that she will be restored to normal health while the internment lasts

*The Adyar Bulletin* The event of the month, September, has been the announcement of the release (on the 17th) of Mrs Besant and also of Messrs Arundale and Wadia, from the internment in which the Government of Madras had placed them. It has been an unconditional release, and

the great political movement of which Mrs. Besant is a leader has gained a constitutional victory.]

October 1st, Birthday Message. "Will, Wisdom, Intellect—these are the Divine Trinity in man. Intellect to plan, Wisdom to inspire, Will to execute."

*The Adyar Bulletin.* Really from the Editor this month, November, though the Editor does not want to write it one little bit, being in a whirlwind of addresses, memoranda, pamphlets in connection with the coming of the Secretary of State for India (Mr. Montagu) to the country of which he is, ultimately, the responsible head. . . . There is great satisfaction here over the coming of Mr. Montagu, and the faith of India in Great Britain's love of liberty and justice, which was burning low, has been revived thereby, and hope has taken the place of dull discontent. H. E. the Viceroy has loyally associated himself with the changed policy of the British Government, and this has naturally pleased the Indians. After all, a policy of liberty and justice must be more congenial to him, as an Englishman, than one of repression and unfair treatment.

My election as President of the National Congress for the coming year gives me, I frankly say, great satisfaction, for it is the endorsement by India of the great Home Rule campaign. . . . My planets just now must all be in the House of Travels. Up to Simla, back to Madras. Up to Delhi, back to Madras. Ten days hence, up to Delhi once more, and back again to Madras. . . .

Our Theosophical Convention is to be held this year in Calcutta, and the Convention lectures have the general title of "The Theosophical Outlook." The lectures will be



delivered by Mr Jinarājādāsa Mr G S Arundale, Mr B P Wadia, and the Hon Mr Justice Sadasivier

National Week is very full of work for all of us We have the first meeting of the National Board of Education on the 25th December but we shall need more than one sitting for our work I think The National Congress begins on the 26th, the Theosophical Society preceding it on the 25th I reach Calcutta on the 24th to be duly received The All India Congress Committee meets on the 25th, so the day will be well filled The Congress works from the 26th to the 29th the Muslim League on the 30th and 31st Then there are the Industrial and Social Conferences, and the first Social Service Conference over which Mr Gandhi presides (*The Theosophist*, January 1918)

### 1918

Greetings to all friends in North and South, in East and West on this New Year's Day Will the Year now born, 1918, bring us Peace? God grant it Yet only if the coming of Peace would mean true blessing to the world, and not a breathing space to recover for fiercer war For if Might could triumph over Right and the rod of oppression could remain unbroken, whether in East or West, then were Peace a deadlier curse than war

Just now I am on a short tour, short in time though not in mileage, to Bombay, Surat, Broach, Delhi, Cawnpur, Lucknow, and possibly to two or three other places The tour is Theosophical, educational and political, three branches of the great work for the uplift of India, for

Theosophy makes peace between warring creeds, education builds up the citizens of the future, and the political is not the small strifes of political parties, but the great movement for the Liberty of India, the Mother of all the Aryan Races. . . . With the liberation of India, my political work will come to its natural end. I entered the field for that one purpose, and with its winning my work therein will be done. (*The Theosophist*, March).

Time flies swiftly in these days so full of effort and of struggle. This flight of Time offers curious and conflicting phenomena. . . . These thoughts spring from the feeling that the National Congress took place a very long time ago, though less than three months have passed away since it occurred. So many places have been visited, so many lectures given, so many people seen, that the meeting and parting in Calcutta can scarce be seen through the crowd of happenings. The work has been very heavy and I fear that Lord Pentland and his three Councillors have permanently weakened my health by the unjust punishment they inflicted on me. I can work hard still, but become very tired, and all the old spring has gone, I fear never to return. Probably, at my age, recuperative power is small, and they broke down my vigorous health, and have deprived me of all the *joie de vivre* which has never before failed me. However, it is better to have suffered wrong than to have inflicted it, and I would not change places with them for anything the world could give.

Headquarters has been very full for this last fortnight with the Summer School for Teachers. Last year such a School was held, and proved to be useful, and this year it

was repeated on a somewhat larger scale. I had the honour of opening it with a talk on Education on May 13th, and thereafter came a steady stream of work educational—lectures, demonstrations, discussions papers, and in the evenings some form of entertainment, music a drama of Rabindranath Tagore, recitations, Greek dancing and so on.

A very notable entertainment was given one evening, at which poets recited some of their own poems, and non-poets, the minority, recited other people's. India's poetess, Shrimati Sarojini Devi, came surrounded by seven other members of her brilliant family—sisters, brother, sons—and she recited some of her own exquisite poems (*The Theosophist* June)

A great man in England, known all over the English-speaking world, said lately that few people realised how much the Theosophical Society had done to make India better understood in England. How glad our H P B would have been to hear those words. For they are true. Few are the Theosophists who do not look on India as the Holy Land, and their whole thought of India is coloured by their reverence for and their gratitude to the India of the Sages and the Saints (*The Adyar Bulletin*, June)

My own work is very heavy, and I am just off to Bombay, to attend an important little Conference on the Reforms (Montagu-Chelmsford). During the last week—I write on Sunday, July 14th—the Madras Centre of the Society for the Promotion of National Education has put its best foot forwards. On Sunday last the Temporary Building of the National University was opened by the Hon. Dewan Bahadur Sadasivier, the Vice-Chancellor, before a goodly

gathering. At the same time and place the Agricultural College was opened. On Tuesday the Boys' National High School was opened, a delightfully-situated, spacious bungalow in large grounds. On Wednesday the Girls' National School was opened, and in the evening the College of Commerce. This is a good beginning for our Capital City. The value of medical examination came out in the Boys' School, in which a young boy was found to have a beginning of valvular disease of the heart, curable at that early stage. It was quite unsuspected and its discovery means cure. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, July).

(*The Adyar Bulletin*, August. The Editor is away, touring in the North and the West, busily engaged on service for India. During the month she has been twice in Bombay, twice to Calcutta, and is for the third time in Bombay trying to keep political India united.)

*The Theosophist*. It is difficult to write to you, readers mine, in these days of strict censorship. . . . So I must not tell you of the Special National Congress, held at Bombay, August 29-31, with its 5,100 delegates, and its 6,000 visitors, a record Congress, and all the work done therein. From all parts of India came the delegates, earnest, steadfast men and women, of all creeds and castes, and classes. . . . Moreover the Congress passed a notable resolution which I must put on record here: "Women, possessing the same qualifications as are laid down for men in any part of the Scheme (of Reforms), shall not be disqualified on account of sex."

October 1st, Birthday Message. "Be firm, be strong, be self-controlled; your feet are on the Rock

of Ages, and beyond the drifting clouds there shines the STAR "

I must repeat here (*The Adyar Bulletin*) my grateful thanks to the friends who in many countries have written, cabled and telegraphed loving wishes for my 71st birthday . . . To one and all I tender thanks and good wishes, only adding the hope that the "many returns" wished by some may only be as many as they are "useful returns," for it would be bad to outgrow one's usefulness, and to be tied to the world as a clog instead of a wing. Each of us, young or old, little or big, must be either a clog or wing on the world's upward climbing, and it is far better to leave the world than to be clog to its progress.

It is quaint that the years of this magazine, *The Theosophist*, and of its present Editor coincide, and that October 1st marks for each the entrance into a New Year of mortal life. Seventy-one years lie behind the Editor, years of struggle after the brief, bright years of youth, but the Ideals embraced on my entrance into public life in 1874 are with me still. TRUTH, as the Ideal to pursue, LIBERTY, as the Ideal for which to struggle, SERVICE, as the Ideal to which action should be consecrated. I cannot change them, I cannot better them. So I must enter this my seventy-second year with them, and strive for them to the end.

"The Lord shall give His people the blessing of Peace." So ran the ancient Psalm. And the Lord in this month has given Peace to His world, stilling the roar of the cannon, the moans of the wounded, the sobs of the bereaved. The blessing of Peace! To a war-riven world,

to hearts scarred with the fire of pain, can there be any greater blessing than the blessing of Peace? . . .

I am just going off (November 25th) to my dear old home in Benares, to attend the Court and Senate of the Hindu University. The Convocation was also to have been held, but the prevalence of the influenza epidemic caused its postponement. It will also be pleasant to visit the Girls' College, and the two schools for boys and girls respectively. Benares always seems to me to be my Indian "home," though I also love Adyar, but Benares was my first home, and cannot lose its place in my heart.

Our [Theosophical] Anniversary this year is to be held at Delhi, as is also that of the Society for the Promotion of National Education. . . . (*The Theosophist*, December).

Our Theosophical meetings at Delhi were very satisfactory. I had the pleasure of delivering four lectures on "The Problems of Peace" to crowded audiences and the Presidential Address aroused much interest. Then Bro. C. Jinarâjadâsa took my place in the other work of the T.S. and the Indian Section. And George S. Arundale joined in, lecturing on Education, on Scouting, on Parents and Teachers—Delhi's taste for lectures was insatiable, for it is normally starved.

We have had a two days' visit to Adyar from Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the Chancellor of our National University, and he returns here for a week, from the 23rd to the 30th January. Sir Rabindranath's head might serve as a model for the conventional head of Christ, and he has a singularly attractive and ideal personality—one of those whose "presence is a benediction." (*The Adyar Bulletin*, January 1919).



Congress desired, and have become a very black sheep. I cannot help it, for I consider that if we can gain the essential features of the Congress-League scheme, as embodied in our modifications, we shall do exceedingly well, under present circumstances, and I decline to imperil the whole scheme by going back to our earlier position and demanding more. The party which was originally for rejection . . . and which refuses all negotiation, was triumphant at the Delhi Congress, and has therefore the right to say that it represents the country. . . . None the less, with my native obstinacy I cannot give way, though I acknowledge that the country is, for the moment, with them, not with me. But majorities change, and therein lies my hope. If the present attempt at unprecedented coercion were stopped, and the kindlier feelings towards India shown during the War were allowed to prevail, the atmosphere would change. At present things are very black.

I have added to my sins by objecting to Mr. Gandhi's pledge to break laws chosen for the purpose by a committee, and by urging that such breaking of laws was likely to produce disastrous results on casual crowds, and was likely to lead to riot and bloodshed, whatever its promoters might say. My prophecy unfortunately proved to be true, another grave offence. . . . Meanwhile, bodies of sturdy friends have gathered and have organised themselves into a National Home Rule League, for continuing on the lines originally suggested by me.

[*The Adyar Bulletin*. As these words are being written, there is still some doubt as to when actually, Mrs. Besant, Mr. Wadia and Mr. Scurr . . . will step on board the vessel





seen as the tawdry pretence it is, and it is better surveyed from the ship than ashore.

Two hundred more soldiers came on board, but where they are bestowed only their officers can tell. The men seemed to be packed as closely as possible before.

Europe is giving us a cold welcome, grey seas and very cold air. But the sea is smooth, and while that lasts all else is bearable. Our next stop is Malta, said to be three days off. I recall the little steamer that used to tear across the water to Brindisi with the mails, and land us in two days at that port, and then the swift train through to Calais and across the Channel, and on to London, punctual to the minute. Tilbury Docks, reached via Gibraltar, looks gloomy by contrast, but there are whispers that we may be allowed to land at Plymouth. May they prove to be true.

*May 28th*

We are to reach Malta at 5 or 6 o'clock this evening—so say the authorities, and though this letter contains no news, I shall post it there. The next stop is Gibraltar, and that only to take in water. During the last week we had to parade on the boat deck on Monday and Thursday only. Now we are considered to be in the "danger zone," and the daily parade is renewed. A few people, it seems, hide away—a particularly silly proceeding, and one showing a regrettable lack of the courtesy with which a ship's discipline ought to be observed by all who travel on her. Moreover if we did strike a mine, the people who do not know exactly what they should do, would endanger the lives of others as well as their own.

*June 11th*

After leaving Gibraltar the sea was not quite as smooth as before, but there was nothing really to complain of, and we anchored at Plymouth on June 6th at about 7 a.m. The first news from land reached me almost immediately — "Mrs Besant, your daughter and several friends have come to meet you, — a pleasant greeting after the long weeks on board. The next from an amused officer — "Mrs Besant, there's a reporter asking for you — so I soon found myself in the familiar Western position of the interviewed.

. . . . .

We rushed through the lovely scenery of Devon in reserved compartments, discussing many subjects in a fragmentary manner, and likewise sandwiches and cakes. At Paddington station we steamed into a big crowd flower-laden and cheering a surprising and unexpected welcome, and then in motor cars to Wimbledon.

From *New India* Very conveniently, the Annual Convention of the T.S. in England and Wales began at 2.30 p.m. on the next day, June 7th. We motored to London to the delightful flats arranged by loving friends for daily work, wherein B. P. Wadia and P. K. Telang are housed. They are in a house just off the busy Strand but in a backwater, and perfectly quiet, and in the very centre of everything. Messrs Wadia, Telang and Scurr landed that morning—or rather at midnight of the 6th—and we met them at 1.45 and took them to their London home. Leaving them there, we flew to the Convention,

whither they followed, and in due course made their first speeches there to a London audience.

To tea at the flat came Messrs. Srinivasa Sastri, K. C. Roy, and Polak, and we had a political sitting afterwards. Mr. and Mrs. St. Nihal Singh also foregathered with us in Wimbledon in the evening ; Sunday comprised three Theosophical meetings, the last a most interesting lecture from Mr. Sinnett. There was also a Theosophical luncheon at a restaurant, and a Theosophical tea at the flat. Friends had come from Sweden, Holland, France, Belgium, Ireland, Scotland, Chili, Australia, America, and the meetings were delightful.

Monday morning saw the closing of the Convention meeting, another meeting of Theosophists to tea ; dinner at Lady Emily Lutyens', followed by a big reception at the Queen's Hall. . . . On Tuesday a pretty demonstration by children of the Theosophical Education Trust, who more than justified their teachers. On both Tuesday and Wednesday there were many visitors, among them Messrs. V. S. Sastri, Snowden, Nevinson, Brailsford, Bullitt and George Lansbury, and we had much interesting conversation. . . . Mr. Lansbury was, as ever, the good genius of the gathering, and we contributed accounts of Indian conditions, and answered questions. Our hostess, Lady De La Warr, to whom the flats belong, is daily with us, and we go back to Wimbledon together, where I stay with Miss Bright.

We have been having a good many E.S. meetings on Sundays since I arrived in England, and I have already presided at the Annual Conventions of England and Wales,





DR. BESANT, ABOUT 1920

and of Scotland I am also to preside at the Northern, Eastern, Midland and Western Conferences, and to lecture at various Lodges in towns which we are visiting to speak on India. Theosophy must ever remain our inspiration and form the backbone of our lives, otherwise the burden of incessant labour would be too heavy to be borne.

On the four Sundays in October I lecture in the Queen's Hall, London. The general subject is "The War and the Future", the sub-titles I "The War, and the Builders of the Commonwealth", II "The War, and its Lessons on Fraternity", III "The War, and its Lessons on Equality", IV "The War, and its Lessons on Liberty".

October 1st, Birthday Message ("Great Silence Day," Prayer for Peace) "O Hidden Life of God, outside which nothing can exist, help us to see Thee in the face of our enemies, and to love Thee in them. So shall Thy Peace spread over our world, and Thy Will shall at last be done on Earth as it is done in Heaven."

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[At the time of writing, news has just been received of our President's safe arrival at Bombay, on December 19th.

Followed the news that she would not travel south for at least a fortnight, as Benares required her presence for the Theosophical Convention, and after that, duty called to Amritsar—the scene, this year, of the Indian National Congress—G L K

1920

Everything comes to an end some time—even a National Congress, and on Sunday, January 11th the

one so long expected, so much desired (Mrs. Besant), arrived early in the morning from Bombay.—G.L.K.]

¶ In once more ascending the Watch-Tower, I am glad, though a very peripatetic Editor, to greet friends all over from that lofty eminence. . . . During the last year I have learnt more, I think, than in any previous year of this long life of mine, to feel like a soldier under orders, ready to pack up and depart to any portion of the globe to which he may be sent at any moment.

People are continually asking me : “ Are you going to Europe ? ” “ Can you go to America ? ” “ Will you visit ” Finland, Italy, Norway, Ireland, England, Scotland, France, Egypt, Africa, Australia, as the case may be. In the more restricted area of India—and India is more like a continent in space, though a country in atmosphere—questions rain in, from Kashmir in the far north to Ceylon in the extreme south, and Burma in the east ; there is a T. S. Conference here, a political Conference there, schools, hospitals, institutions of all sorts claim foundation-stones, openings, anniversaries. All good work that needs to be done, but one physical body cannot do it all, and I have not yet learned to manage more than one physical body, though astral and mental ones may be manufactured and guided fairly easily. So I disappoint more than I please, and am the placid recipient of many grumbings, motivated by love and therefore the more touching. Having been taught—very many years ago—that it is not now my duty to tread the path of the martyr but the path of the disciple, I refuse everything which does not fall within my



physical powers without undue strain, and so go on my way calmly resistant. More seriously, dear Theosophical comrades, I am working up to the limit of my strength, and harder than I worked in my younger days. You must forgive me if, while my every motive is Theosophical, my work is, and must be for some years, more in the world than in the Society, for this is the great transition period, and, ere long—to use a Christian phrase—the kingdoms of this world must become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and Their servants have to work incessantly for that end, in that the time is short.

My chief "job" is India, that she may rise to her full stature, and, a Free Nation, may do for the world what none but she can do—pour out over the earth, from her place in the great Commonwealth, of which Britain is the centre, the priceless spiritual treasures conserved with this object for thousands of years, and prove to all the Nations of the Earth, as she proved it in the glorious day of her youth, that where the kingdom of God and His righteousness are found, there also are found the might of intellect, the nobility of ethic, and the outer splendour of worldly prosperity—All these are added where the Spirit reigns supreme (*The Theosophist*, March)

I find myself possessed of various new titles, such as "World-President" and "International President," which I by no means appreciate. The old simple "President of the Theosophical Society" seems to me to be more attractive without the grandiloquent prefixes. By the way, speaking of Presidents, I may remind the Society that my second term of office in the T.S. expires next year, I shall

then be in my seventy-fourth year, and it seems to me that the Society would do well to consider the question of electing a successor, instead of asking me to undertake a third term of office. I have been thirty-one years in the T.S. this month, and have done a fair amount of work. I think that a person younger than myself might be more useful to the Society, and I should not be less ready to be of any use to this beloved movement out of office than in it, as long as I live. (*The Theosophist*, June).

The World-Congress, I hear, has been put off for a year, owing to my inability to reach Europe. I am sorry to cause so much inconvenience, but I happen to be one of the "restraining forces" at present in India, and it would be rank cowardice and faithlessness to leave this country in perhaps the most serious crisis that it has faced since the East India Company first started on its way. Every one who has any influence and the courage to use it, and who values the tie between India and Britain, is bound to stand steadfastly against the danger of its rupture.

On the top of Punjab troubles has come the Muslim question, which stirs to its very foundation the religious feelings of Musalmans, and has led to the "non-co-operation with Government" campaign, aimed at the complete paralysis of the Government. A few of us, very few, are writing and speaking vigorously against this. I have just returned from a journey of three thousand miles there and back—to oppose this at the All-India Congress Committee and at the Musalman Conference, where a little handful of us stood out against Non-Co-operation,

against the crowd of Muslims supported by the Hindu Extremists, who are making common cause with them  
(*The Adyar Bulletin* June)

Amid all the tumult of these struggling years the Theosophical Society has followed its steady peaceful path fixing its gaze on that bright Eastern Star which low down on the horizon tells of the coming Lord of Day. It is pleasant to think how our Lodges ring the globe, as we turn eastward we greet Burma and Java, and then China and now Japan has lit its torch, the light leaps eastward across the heaving ocean and meets the western world in Canada, and North America, from its far north to Mexico in the south, is studded with the shining lamps of the Ancient Wisdom. Across from New York to Ireland, again across the ocean, and Britain, France and Spain speed the message on across Europe. North and South, Russia, despite its miseries, has kept its candle alight, and Egypt and East Africa flash on the word, echoed from North Africa and South, to India, where again the circle ends, re-entering itself. From all these nuclei radiates out the recognition which shall spread till all shall live it, and the world be glad. (The Adyar Bulletin, July)

To-morrow—I am writing on August 7th—we shall welcome home our wandering brother, B P Wadia. He will have a tremendous reception, I expect, from the Labour Unions here.

It is a great time for the annual meetings of Theosophical Federations just now in India, and I am presiding at quite a number. These Conferences are very

useful here as in Britain, where also they form quite important features of the Theosophical year. (*The Theosophist*, August).

I have received various remonstrances about my suggestion that the Society might consider the election of a new President in 1921. I had at the time a good reason for the suggestion, and I can now write frankly. Last year I found that my sight was giving me trouble, but in the rush of work in England I could not find time to put myself in the hands of a good oculist. In January, after my return to India, I went to one, and he told me that one eye was useless—I knew that I could not see much with it—and that the other was going. He also told me that there was no cure. I therefore had to face the prospect of going blind, and it did not seem to me that I could fulfil my duties as President of the Theosophical Society after I had lost my sight. So I thought it would be better for me not to stand again for election. However, a sudden change took place some weeks ago, and the useless eye is recovering its power of vision and the other is going on all right, so that I shall be able to continue the work, if the Society so wishes. The recovery, I must confess, has been a great relief; though I was gradually preparing myself for the loss of sight, it was not a pleasant prospect, and I am very thankful to be spared the trial. (*The Theosophist*, September.)

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October 1st, Birthday Message. (Message sent to a Theosophical Conference at Soratuperiankuppam, South India) :

"The time is hard and the work is heavy, but we must remember that we are an advance guard, sent forward by the great Commander to bear the brunt of the attacks from superstition and bigotry, so that the next generation may live in a purer atmosphere and develop nobler characters. The coming civilisation the civilisation of the New Era, cannot be built up till the worst elements of the present are purged away from our midst. Glorious is the task of facing terrible odds in the service of the ancient Rishis of the Motherland. we are part of the Army of Light, and victory is inevitable. We know our Chiefs we trust our Commander, the Flag that we bear is blazoned with the Star in the East the Star which by a beautiful coincidence is the Star of India. For us, there is no fear, no doubt, for we know our goal and the road to it. Keep then in your hearts the Peace of the Eternal, abiding in the Self."

I write in Kashi, in Benares, the City of many memories, of great Sages and great Saints of learned Philosophers and famous Kings, the City which is the very heart of Hinduism. In that beloved City I am writing, in my old home, Shanti Kunja, at my old writing-table, sitting on my old chauki. The roses are blooming everywhere, the rose-coloured, small intensely fragrant roses of the United Provinces, from which is made the wonderful attar of roses, said to cost a guinea a drop, but also there is made exquisite rose-water, so sweet and lasting in its perfume that the air catches it up and flings it far and wide. Kashi remains ever to me the dearest and loveliest of Cities. To come to the

United Provinces is like coming home. (*The Theosophist*, November).

For the first time since 1914 we meet in Convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, our central Home. I trust all who can will come to our gathering—one of great moment in the history of our movement. (*The Theosophist*, December).

1921

We have had a delightful Convention, all the residents of Adyar vying with each other to make the visiting members feel welcome and at home. . . . The Banyan Tree in Blayatsky Gardens served as our cathedral for the four Convention lectures on “The Great Plan.” They aroused much interest in the large audiences that gathered at 8 a.m. on the four successive mornings. Other lectures were given, one by Bro. Jinarâjadâsa on “India’s Gift to the Nations.”

H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught arrived here [Madras] today (January 10th), and had a very fine reception. . . . Desperate efforts were made by the Non-Co-operators to spoil the proceedings, but they were a ludicrous failure. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, January).

This is written from far-off Delhi, the Capital of India, where are gathered together between seventy and eighty Ruling Princes, the Government of India, the members of the Council of State of the Legislative Assembly, as well as a motley crowd of all sorts and conditions of men, among whom I appear. At moment of writing Delhi is *en fête*,

because all the aforesaid are gathered around H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught as a centre . . . Today (February 9th) will ever remain memorable in Indian history, as the day which, in the words of the King's message to the Legislature, was "the beginning of Swaraj" (*The Adyar Bulletin*, February)

Another public event of importance is the visit to India of General Sir Robert and Lady Baden-Powell, the Chief Scout and Chief Guide. They came to knit into one organisation the various Scout organisations in India: the original B. P. Scouts and the Indian Associations outside them. The chief All-India organisation was the Indian Boy Scouts, started by myself, and trained by Mr. F. G. Pearce and G. S. Arundale, of which I was "Protector", this spread rapidly in various parts of India. . . . Lord Pentland, the then Governor of Madras, organised another Association confined to English and Anglo-Indian boys. Under our present Governor, Lord Willingdon, the "Besant Scouts," and the "Pentland Scouts" as they were popularly called, amalgamated, and now we have merged ourselves in the B. P. organisation. In the big joint Rally we had when Sir Robert was here, he announced the amalgamation; there was a very pretty sight: the Indian and British troops rushed into each other's ranks, shaking hands and cheering. Some of us saw a vision of the future in it, when the men, who are now boys, will work hand-in-hand for the service of the world. (*The Theosophist*, March).

Cables have been coming in during the last fortnight from several lands, all bringing words of affection, much to

be valued in these days of storm and stress. National Societies have been holding their annual meetings ; hence the cables, here gratefully acknowledged. . . . It is a wonderful thing, this beloved Society of ours, scattered over the world, working for one purpose, directed to one aim, to spread the WISDOM that enlightens, to join up the links of Brotherhood that cheer and save. For two and thirty years I shall have been in it, since early in May, 1921. Never for one moment have I regretted the entry ; never for one moment has my faith in its true Founders wavered, nor my gratitude to its earthly founders weakened. And now, thirty-two years after I came into it, welcomed by our H.P.B., I can truly say that the teachings of Theosophy have been to me an ever-increasing Light and Strength, and in the most literal sense, I know in whom I have believed. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, April).

For a short space I must bid my readers goodbye. I leave Madras by the Postal Express on May 27, and Bombay in the P. and O. S.S. *Caledonia* on May 28. Landing at Marseille and taking the Special to London, I should arrive there about June 13 or 14. Then will follow a month of "intensive" work in England and Wales, and a visit to Scotland, mainly on law business. Then to Paris, going aside, if possible, i.e., if there be time before the Paris Congress—to Amsterdam and Brussels. If there be time, once more, I want to turn aside to Geneva before leaving for India, where at present my chief work lies. (*The Theosophist*, June)

I have probably made *The Theosophist* a week late in order to take up again my monthly task of writing my note



for the Watch-Tower, for I wished to place on record an account of the great event of the meeting of the World Congress of Theosophists in Paris at the end of July, and in the rush of events immediately after it, my visits to Amsterdam and Brussels and the few crowded days in London, I had not time to catch the steamer of August 6th at Marseille, and perforce awaited this one, which left on August 13th. The voyage has included a great deal of writing, a mass of delayed correspondence a Presidential Address to be delivered two days after landing in Bombay at the second Reform Conference of the National Home Rule League, the weekly *dole* to *New India* and so forth. Amid this come the present notes. The French T S has built for itself a fine and most convenient Headquarters . . . The World Congress opened there on July 23, at 2 30 p.m., the whole building being a hive of activity from the early morning. . . There were thirty-nine countries represented by over fourteen hundred delegates— a very creditable number for our first Theosophical World Congress. (*The Theosophist*, September)

October 1st. Birthday Message

“ Watchman ! What of the Night ?

• The Night is near to the Dawning •

How know you the Sun is near ?

• The Morning Star, the Star in the East,

Is shining above the horizon •

Brothers ! Prepare ! Lift up your heads,

Your ELDER BROTHER draws near ”

In our *Adyar Bulletin*, as in *New India*, I must offer grateful thanks to all who remember my seventy-fifth

birthday, with cable, telegram and letter, some accompanied by a birthday gift. The money gifts I put aside for my travelling expenses, for they are very heavy, save for a little bag to replace one that is wearing out, for which I subtract a small sum from each, so that it will serve me as a symbol.

November is a very busy month with us at Adyar. Reports are coming in from the National Societies, to be incorporated in the Annual Report for 1921. Preparations for the Annual Convention, to take place this year at Benares, are being discussed and settled. Residents who have been away—some to foreign lands, others to rest-places nearer home—are coming back.

We had the pleasure of welcoming Home, at day-break on December 3, at the "Gateway of India," [Bombay] the two Brothers, who left us as boys, and have come back to us as men. On December 5 Adyar gave them a royal welcome. The Hall was exquisitely decorated with swinging interlacing strings of flowers, pendant from the roof, and was filled with rejoicing members of the Society and the Order. As I stood between them on the platform, with the statues of the two Founders behind us and the joyous crowd in front, I tried to say a few words of welcome, but speech was difficult, so overpowering was the feeling of the glad closing of one chapter in the story. Mr. Krishnamurti followed me, but his words of thanks were also very brief, as were those of Mr. Nityanandam. And thus on December 5th, 1921, the chapter closed which began on January 11th, 1910, when the charge of guarding and of training was given to my Brother

C W. Leadbeater and myself Through storms and sore troubles we have passed but the charge has been fulfilled, and our "I will" has been kept unstained No harm has touched them, morally and mentally they are all that love can desire

1922

I must not forget to mention the visit of H R H the Prince of Wales to Benares Hindu University on December 13th, to receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters There was the usual rude and disloyal hartal in the city, but it in no way marred his visit as the University lies outside the town, facing the palace of H H the Maharaja of Benares on the opposite bank of Gangâ The Prince looked very young, and his voice carried splendidly

On the following day, it was my good fortune to receive a similar Degree, and I value it much, as a link with the institution which I took a share in founding and in nursing for eighteen years I am writing on January 12th, and the Prince of Wales comes here [Madras] tomorrow Over 2,000 of our Scouts and Guides are coming to receive him, and we have a grand Rally in his honour on the 16th, in the grounds of Government House, which are particularly well suited to the manoeuvres of the Scouts It will be a Record Rally for India, and we are rather proud of ourselves, especially at this moment, when every effort is being made by the disloyal to utilise his visit to insult the Government and Great Britain Adyar Headquarters, New India office and the Y M I A will be gay with flags

during the days of his visit, and the first will be illuminated at night. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, January).

Mme. de Manziarly has suggested that the day on which the thoughts and love of all our members scattered over the wide world should turn to Adyar, the Adyar Day, should be February 17th, and I have accepted the suggestion. February 17th brings to us three memories, two of the birth into the higher world that men call death, and one of birth into the lower. On February 17, 1907, our President-Founder left his mortal body, after half a life of faithful, devoted service. . . . On February 17, 1600, Giordano Bruno went home, in a chariot of fire from the Field of Flowers in Rome. On February 17, 1847, Charles W. Leadbeater opened his baby eyes to the dimness which we call light in our physical world. It is a good day to choose, linked with three servants of Humanity. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, February).

I am here in Delhi for a six days' week, leaving for home on Sunday, the 12th March. It is a very busy time. First came the general debate on the Budget in the Legislative Assembly, and I duly attended it on Monday and Tuesday. . . . On the Wednesday, I lunched at the Viceregal Lodge, and had an interview with the Viceroy afterwards. . . . The morning of Thursday I spent again at the Assembly, for the debate on a resolution to ask the Viceroy to exercise the Royal Prerogative and release the Ali brothers. . . . Today, Friday the 10th, comes the bad news that Mr. Montagu has resigned, evidently driven out by the reactionaries. India loses in him her best friend, and our hearts are heavy. . . .





DR. BESANT IN 1922

Today I lecture on "Civil Disobedience Its Use and Abuse," but whether I shall be allowed to go through I cannot say (*The Adyar Bulletin*, March)

I am writing on April 20th, and I leave Adyar with Mr Warrington for Colombo on the 22nd [on the way to Australia] (*The Theosophist*, May)

*The Theosophist*, June

May 2, 1922

Off the Australian coast are we, though not yet in sight of it, and of this we had a reminder on Saturday last, April 29th, in the shape of a wireless message from Perth Lodge, Perth being a town about ten miles from Fremantle, the first port we touch. The Perth members are evidently quick to secure any flying Theosophical bird, and bring it down to alight on this Lodge, for they not only sent loving welcome to their passing President, but informed her that they had arranged a public reception for her

May 3rd

Wireless messages have been flying between the S S Orsova and Perth Lodge. We had arranged to remain on board ship as far as Adelaide. But two days ago came a message from Sydney that kind Dr Locke and Senator Reid were meeting us at Fremantle, and that all arrangements had been made for us to go to Sydney by rail. So we are packing up, and we shall leave the steamer tomorrow, and, after all, I am not sure that we are not glad to escape the Australian Bight

During my stay in Sydney, I was the guest of Mr and Mrs Mackay, two earnest Theosophists who devote their wealth and influence to the service of the Society. Bishop

Leadbeater was also a guest during my stay, and Mr. and Mrs. Jinarajadasa are living there while in Sydney. From sixteen to twenty people gathered daily round their hospitable board, and there seemed to be no limit to their generous welcome and goodwill. For me, they could not do too much in every possible way, and I shall ever keep them in grateful memory. While everyone was goodness itself to me, I must say a word of special gratitude to Dr. Mary Rocke and Senator Reid, who met me on my arrival at Fremantle, five days from Sydney, cared for me in every possible way, and when I left Sydney again escorted me back to Fremantle.

We had a wonderful gathering at Sydney, and were able to do some useful work for the Society. The little storm raged outside but could not mar the joyous serenity of our happy circle. It remains a blessed memory of strength and harmony, and several of its members are scattered far and wide, strong messengers of light and peace wheresoever they may wander on the work committed to them, knowing that dangers and difficulties await them, but that final victory is sure. (*The Theosophist*, July).

Simla, 6-9-22.

These pages are written on the Himalayas, in Simla in the most uncomfortable weather. Thick mist, as thick as a London fog, but clean and white, covers all the wide range of hills and valleys which should be visible from the window at which I am sitting. . . . His Majesty the Sun has shown his glorious face only once in these three days, since Mr. and Mrs. Jamnadas Dwarkadas and myself arrived



at Simla Station in pouring rain      The sun came out to make king's weather for the Viceroy, when he drove in state to open India's Parliament yesterday, but he was rained upon going back, after the ceremony . . . It was a gay and gallant ceremony this State opening of Parliament. The military escort, pacing slowly up the central passage, the Speakers of the two Houses begowned and bewigged, the Viceroy (Lord Reading), tall and slender, with intellectual face and quiet dignity of manner, clad in the blue silk robe of the Order of the Star of India, with long train, borne by two pretty little lads. Seated in a gilded chair, the Viceroy read his speech in his clear voice, with admirable articulation. A difficult speech to make, knowing it would be cabled everywhere, and surrounded as he is by critics, eager to pounce on any point of disagreement.

October 1st My birthday greeting to you, Brothers all the world over, is written from amidst the encircling Himalayas. But not a vestige of them is visible, thick-shrouded as they are in earth-born clouds. Shall I then doubt that the mountains are there that their green slopes, their mighty crags, their heaven-piercing peaks of snow, are but dreams, imagination-fashioned? Nay, verily, for I have seen them, I have trodden them, and I KNOW.

With equal certainty, with equal surety, I know the unshakable truths of the Ancient Wisdom, of the Hierarchy who guides, the World-Teacher who inspires, the Embodied Will who rules. The Himalayas may crumble, but These abide in the Eternal. I see the Star that shines ever over the White Island. Lift up your eyes, my

Brothers, and you shall see it ; then face fearlessly the raging of the storm.

ANNIE BESANT

1st October, 1922.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am writing from Baroda, the Gaekwar of Baroda's well-governed State. Miss Willson and I are State guests, and H. E. the Dewan takes the chair for the public lecture on "The Coming of the World-Teacher." Here is a programme of the day's work. Arrived at 5.27 a.m. from Bombay. 8 a.m., E.S. 9.30, Initiations into T.S. and an address to the T.S. Lodge. That was finished up by 11. 1 p.m., a deputation from Surat. One from Dessar. 2 p.m., Rally of Boy Scouts. 4 p.m., visit to the Girls' School. 4.20, Star meeting. 6.15, Public Lecture. 7.30, short E.S. meeting. Off tomorrow, at 5.37 a.m., to Ahmedabad, for another full programme. Then a day's journey to Bhavnagar and a similar programme. Off to Bombay on the following morning, two busy days there, and then home. Two days in Adyar ; a day and a night southward to a Theosophical two days' Federation Conference. So rolls the ball. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, November).

The four days of the Convention, December 25, 26, 27, 28, were crowded. The morning lectures under the Banyan Tree drew large crowds. The first two were given by myself, on "Your World and Ours." The Vice-President [Mr. Jinarâjadâsa] gave the third, on "The Vision of the God-Man," and the fourth was given by G. S. Arundale, on "The Centre of the Circumference." They will form, I think, an interesting volume. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, January).



held a meeting of E.S. students, and in the evening—under the Banyan Tree again—he gave us a most interesting lecture on the Passion Play of Ober-Ammergau, illustrated by very fine lantern slides taken from the Play itself. We sat on the ground in absolute silence while the wonderful drama unrolled itself before us, in the cool spring eventide.

The Brotherhood Campaign, inaugurated in Great Britain, has been warmly taken up in India. . . . At the request of a number of our travelling Inspectors who are organising the movement in Southern India, I wrote them a few lines for daily repetition, morning and evening, as I did not feel that I could write a meditation, as they had asked me to do. Meditation seems to me to be a very individual thing, the working of one's own mind on some special theme; the most I could do was to suggest a theme. Here it is, as it chanted itself:

- Hidden Life, vibrant in every atom;
- Hidden Light, shining in every creature;
- Hidden Love, embracing all in Oneness;

May each, who feels himself as one with Thee,  
Know he is therefore one with every other.

It sends forth successive waves of colour, pulsing outwards from the speaker, if rhythmically intoned or chanted, whether by the outer or the inner voice, and if some thousands would send these out over successive areas, we might create a very powerful effect on the mental atmosphere, preparing it for the Brotherhood campaign through October, November and December. (*The Theosophist*, June).

[*The Adyar Bulletin* (June)] Most of our readers are probably aware that Dr Besant has now been laid up for over a fortnight on account of blood poisoning supervening on the bite of some venomous insect and has therefore, been unable to attend to any business. The poisoning has unfortunately stimulated into activity the old knee trouble which began with a blow some twenty eight years ago, and which, off and on has always caused trouble.

A cold water treatment has proved very effective and steady improvement is discernible in this particular quarter. But the general condition is still far from satisfactory, being complicated by fever and our President is therefore, very weak. It will probably be at least another week before we can expect that she will be definitely better, and for some time afterwards she will have to go as slow as she can be induced to go.]

. . . . .

Mr G S Arundale was kind enough to write the Editor's pages for me last month but though not yet much good for outside activity I am able to discharge my editorial duties, and work at a convenient little table that spans the long chair on which I spend the day very comfortably (*The Adyar Bulletin*, July)

We hear from Vienna that the European International Congress was a great success. Sixteen hundred delegates gathered there from thirty different Nations, and it seems to have been full of the joyousness which during the last year has been the characteristic of our National Conventions and so strongly marked the last Anniversary at Adyar (*The Theosophist* September)

[October 1st. Dr. Besant publishes as her Birthday Message the Invocation which she gave for the Brotherhood Campaign in May.]

The outstanding features of October and November, since the opening of the Brotherhood Campaign in the Gokhale Hall on September 30th, when Mr. George S. Arundale made his appeal to Youth, has been the wave of the Youth movement which has swept over India, as it has been sweeping over Europe and America. On November 17th, the birthday of the Theosophical Society, there was formed an Indian Section of The International League of Youth. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, December).

## 1924

A new year opens today in the world at large, for January 1st is New Year's Day and the New Year is 1924. . . . To all our readers I send a message of joyous serenity to greet the new-born Year.

The most notable event of the month to us at Headquarters was the successful Convocation of the National University, held in the Headquarters Hall. The Convocation Address was given by Mr. G. S. Arundale, and it made the deepest impression on the audience. . . . Neither our Chancellor, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore—who is away in Kathiawar—nor our Pro-Chancellor, Dr. Subramania Iyer—who is confined to his house by an outworn body—was able to be present, so I had the honour of presiding. (*The Theosophist*, January).

The 17th of the present month is the Anniversary of the 77th birthday of our honoured and loved teacher, C W. Leadbeater, of the passing into the Peace of our President Founder, and of the burning alive of Giordano Bruno in Rome . While on anniversaries I may mention that on August 25 I complete fifty years of public life, for on that day (in 1874) I delivered my first public lecture on "The Political Status of Women," marking my entrance into the open propaganda of Political Reform On August 30, 1874, I wrote my first article in the *National Reformer* under the name of "Ajax" I took a pseudonym, until I had finished a series of papers which I was writing for a generous friend, who thought that the appearance of my name in the *National Reformer* would prejudice his work Fifty years! it is a short time to look back upon, but a long time to live through. (*The Theosophist*, February).

I sometimes wonder what future splendour of development awaits the Theosophical Society in Russia after its long martyrdom For nothing can deprive Russia of her inner mystic life, and though it be buried in the sepulchre by the present tyranny, she shall reap the harvest of her agony, and shall have a glorious resurrection (*The Theosophist*, March)

[Dr Besant visited Poona, Allahabad and Bombay. On 26th March she left Bombay for Europe on the S.S. "Macedonia" There are no further entries in her Diary until June 1st]

The Convention of the T S in England and of the British Isles was remarkable both for its numbers and its

joyfulness. It was necessary to take the Large Queen's Hall for June 7th ; a very interesting discussion took place in the morning, on " The Place of Authority in Theosophical Teachings " ; in the afternoon no less than 26 National Representatives spoke, all but four, I think, being General Secretaries. (*The Theosophist*, August).

### FIFTY YEARS IN PUBLIC WORK

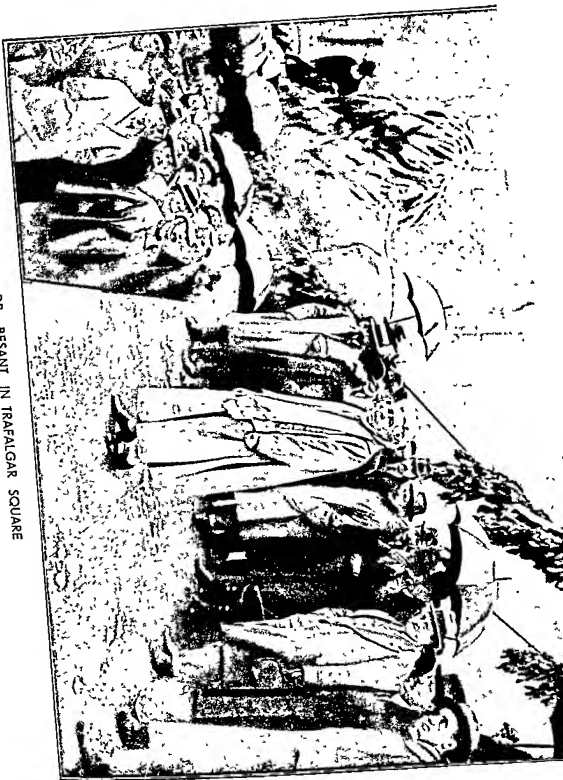
[A public demonstration took place in the Queen's Hall, London, July 23, 1924, to celebrate Dr. Besant's fifty years of public service. She wrote in a " Message to those who are young to-day " :

" Look forward to a future full of nobler tasks that you may do, that we have left undone : full of greater causes that you may serve, that we have not been able to find ; for humanity is ever rising higher and higher when her children serve her generation after generation ; for the world renews her youth and the age that is behind gives birth to the age that is to come. And some have said that I am young. Yes ! Because there is no age for those who strive to live in the eternal."

From an account of the Jubilee meeting : When Mrs. Besant rose to reply she was deadly white and seemed very moved. We must realise that for an hour or more people had been stirring up old memories and pouring adulation over her. Almost her first words were : " The Hall has been more full of the invisible than the visible, who have come to give a word of cheer to an old comrade whom they have left behind." She simply shed all the personal touch, it had never been near her. . . .



DR BESANT IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE





The President returned from Europe on September 1st and royally was she welcomed. She had only a few days in which to unpack, grant interviews, hold meetings and make arrangements for the autumn work before setting out once more, this time for Simla. She will spend the 1st October in Bombay, by special request and return to Adyar early in October. (From the Acting Editor of *The Adyar Bulletin*) ]

October 1st Birthday Message      Think of the one who is dearest to you on earth, one for whom sacrifice is joy. Then lift up your eyes to the Ideal, and remember that such debt of limitless love, such joyful sacrifice, are what we each owe to all human brothers. Nor let us forget, in our relations with the sub-human kingdoms, that helpfulness, tenderness and protection which the higher owe to the lower, since all share with us the One Life, in which we all live, and move and have our being.

Adyar was en fête on November 24, 1924, to welcome home the two Brothers [Krishnamurti and Nityanandam] who had been out of its sight so long. I went to Bombay so as to be able to meet them—being also due there for an important Conference, a little later—slipping away from Adyar earlier than I had intended, and delighted to meet them sooner than would otherwise have been possible.

I am writing on 24th December.      The first day of the Theosophical Society's Forty-ninth Anniversary [Bombay] is over and has gone very well. There are about 1,000 delegates registered, I hear. The Presidential Address was

delivered by myself at 1 p.m. today, and I delivered the first Convention lecture at 5.30 to a huge audience of delegates and members of the public. The Art Exhibition, arranged by Dr. and Mrs. Cousins, was open yesterday to invited guests, and will be open every day to the public. There are some admirable pictures of the Bengal School.

1925

The Editor is sadly in need of an aeroplane at present, owing to the distances she has to cover and the numerous places to be visited. (*The Adyar Bulletin*, February).

The three Kamala lectures were delivered at the University of Calcutta on January 12, 13, and 14. . . . The first lecture on the "Commonwealth of India Bill" was also given on this visit to Calcutta. We left Calcutta on January 16th for Benares where I remained until 21st when Mr. Shiva Rao and myself left for Delhi. On the 24th H. E. the Viceroy was good enough to grant me an interview, and I took the opportunity of presenting him with a copy of the Draft Commonwealth of India Bill. . . .

[February, March, April. Dr. Besant was lecturing and working for the Commonwealth of India Bill in Bombay, Cawnpore and Madras.]

To-day (8th May) is White Lotus Day, and it is also the Great Day of Vaishakh, the Day on which the Lord Buddha was born, reached Illumination, and cast off His mortal body. Not before have the two coincided, and the thought of Vaishakh glorified our Memorial Day. It was

very beautiful feeling which filled the Hall, which was exquisitely decorated, the platform being a carpet of Lotuses in full bloom, and other white blossoms. As usual, there was read a passage from the Bhagavad-Gita and the one from the Light of Asia was the description of the world as it waited for the moment of Illumination. Three short speeches followed, and then each person present offered flowers before the figures of the founders of The Theosophical Society. I love to think that as the sun-rays circle round the globe, they find everywhere groups of Theosophists keeping green the memory of those who brought the Light of the Divine Wisdom to the world in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

I leave Bombay in the P and O S S Kaiser-i-Hind, on July 4th, with Lady Emily Lutyens, and it is a horrid voyage that we shall have, for we shall have to face the monsoon weather, never a pleasant experience.

Dr. Besant's Assistant Editors write

The President arrived in London on July 18th and owing to misinformation by the shipping offices the large number of French friends who usually welcome her at Marseilles, missed her. The President's steamer arrived a day ahead of the time notified, and so when members gathered from the Riviera towns to greet her, it was only to find that she had arrived and left. Soon after her arrival in London, she was present at the second garden party at Buckingham Palace given by Their Majesties King George and Queen Mary. The Times mentions "At the second garden party the King took an early opportunity of talking to Mrs Annie

Besant, a striking figure with her uncovered white hair and white and gold robe."

In August Dr. Besant was present at the Star Camp, Ommen, Holland. (See *The Herald of the Star*.)

*The Theosophist* (September). Last month's Watch-Tower mentioned how the President went this year to London taking with her "The Commonwealth of India Bill." Only a few among the political workers in India pinned their faith to this Bill at the beginning, but they have worked steadily at it during the last two years in spite of a good deal of scepticism. In this situation, it is utterly astonishing to find the Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, suddenly challenging Indians to produce a Constitution. As it is a Constitution that Dr. Besant has been working at, this challenge of Lord Birkenhead has suddenly focussed the attention of all India on Dr. Besant's Bill, which she has taken with her.

October. No Birthday Message in 1925.

The President lectured in the Queen's Hall, London, on six Sundays in September and October, the subject being, "World Problems of Today."

The President, with Mr. J. Krishnamurti and a party of friends, leaves Naples by S.S. Ormuz on November 8, and they are expected in Colombo on November 21.

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Dr. Besant resumes:

*The Adyar Bulletin* (December). At last—long last—I am able to write again as Editor, and to greet friends all the world over, sending to each and all the warmest thanks for the cables, telegrams, and letters showered upon me

from all parts, bringing to me good wishes and kind thoughts, for my 79th birthday. Much has happened since I last wrote "From the Editor". I have travelled far and wide, and come back home loving India, if possible, more than ever, feeling more than ever her unique value to the world, and the splendour of her future destiny. The happenings of these months, spent in foreign lands, have, some of them, been profoundly interesting, and we shall watch with keen observation their evolution from stage to stage. For the time comes near when, once more, the "Lover of Men" will come amongst us, as He came some two thousand years ago, to lay the foundation of a New Civilisation, of which the keynote will be Brotherhood—not only the Brotherhood of Man, but Brotherhood Universal, embracing the lower kingdoms of Nature, the sub-human, climbing towards the light, as well as the higher kingdoms, the super-human, riding to marvellous heights of dazzling glory till lost in "excess of light".

1926

#### *The Jubilee Convention*

We have had a wonderful Convention, attended by nearly 3000 delegates from all parts of the world, while the visitors to the public lectures more than doubled the number. . . . The Headquarters Hall was used for lectures and entertainments of all sorts, while the Banyan Tree was our Cathedral for public lectures, and for many of those restricted to members of the Theosophical Society, or to those of the Order of the Star in the East. One new feature was introduced into the lectures under the Banyan Tree.

“ Loud speakers ” were used, for the first time in India, and they proved a great success. The voice of the speaker was heard over an area extending beyond the wide-spreading branches of the huge tree, with the result that there was no crowding, and every one could hear perfectly. . . .

A remarkable feature of the Convention was the atmosphere of peace, of serenity, that prevailed throughout ; there was no excitement, no flurry, even on the 28th December, when, as our Brother Krishnaji was concluding his speech, his sentence was broken into by our Lord the World-Teacher, who took possession of his body, and spoke a couple of sentences. Only a deeper peace, a strong serenity, enveloped and penetrated into the great audience. (*The Theosophist*, January).

On February 4th, Miss Bright, Krishnaji, Rajagopal and myself left Adyar, after the ever-memorable Jubilee Convention, and soon afterwards the remaining visitors also went their several ways. . . . We seem to be in a cycle of foundation-stone-laying and opening of new Lodges. I slipped out of the train at 1 o’ clock a.m. on the 6th at Poona to lay the foundation-stone of a building for the Poona Theosophical Lodge. . . . On February 7th, we motored to the land purchased at Juhu—a place on the sea-shore, a few miles from Bombay—for the Theosophical Co-operative Colony, where a foundation-stone was to be laid for the Co-Masonic Lodge “ Concord,” which is to have its building there. . . .

Monday, February 8th, began with an E. S. meeting, followed by some political work, and much writing, in a vain attempt to overtake my belated correspondence. I must



apologise for the many unanswered letters which lie in reproachful heaps February 9th at 6 p.m. came the Baby Welfare Week Opening, a function performed by H. E. the Governor of Bombay Sir Leslie Wilson made a very good speech, and my own address concluded the meeting

That same night left for Hyderabad, Sindh, forty hours off, Mr. Shiva Rao meeting me at Ahmedabad and accompanying me on the way The visit to Sindh, long overdue, was a very successful one, its functions were various—Theosophical, musical, political, Scouting and Masonic. [Hyderabad, Koti and Karachi were all visited]

Multan City was duly reached on February 16, and there the first business was the laying of the foundation stone of a building for the local T S Lodge That made the third foundation stone since leaving Adyar, as well as the consecration of two Masonic Lodges in eleven days Lahore shewed, I am glad to say, a great revival of activity, on the one day we were able to spend there We left Lahore for Delhi at about half past nine

I expect to leave Bombay with Miss Rosalind Williams, Krishnaji and Mr. Rajagopalachariar in the P and O S S. Rajaputana on May 8th. We leave beautiful Adyar on April 28th, as I have to visit Surat, Broach, Shuklatirtha, Ahmedabad, Baroda. At the last mentioned place we have to consecrate a new Co-Masonic Lodge, and install the officers.

I leave for U.S.A. in August and reach New York in time to lecture there before going on to Chicago for the Convention.

By the Assistant Editors :

A cable has just been received which tells us that Dr. Besant has arrived in London (May 22) earlier than the scheduled time, how "radiantly well" she looks, and that she was immediately busy with work, reporters, etc.

The four lectures given by Dr. Besant in the Queen's Hall in July on "The Coming of the World Teacher" will be published as soon as possible. Hundreds, nay thousands, have flocked to hear her this time, more than ever before, and we read in one short report of the Scotch Convention that in closing the President likened a "meeting of that kind to the filling of an empty vessel. It gave the lonely people living in isolated places strength to keep Theosophy alive. By talking with others they went back encouraged, brightened and helped. Such an one was sent into loneliness because he was strong enough to bear it. He had the ability to stand alone, and that power would be utilised by the Great Ones for the helping of the world."

In a short letter received from the President as she left England (for U.S.A.) she tells us that "much good work has been done."

August 20th, Opening of the Theosophical Convention at Chicago. The President closed the Convention with the following words :

"We know each other the better for the days that here we have spent, and in going back to your homes, back to your separate States, you will carry with you the light of Theosophy that here we have striven to serve. You are building your houses on the rock of truth, and will hold up the torch of truth high so that all may see it. So may

the Divine strength go with you the Divine love encompass you, the Divine wisdom inspire you until you spread that wisdom far and wide over the whole of the hemisphere in which you live, until to use the words of an ancient Hebrew, the Divine Wisdom shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea

Dr Besant writes— The Society [in U S A] had a most joyous Convention this year some 2 000 members meeting in the huge auditorium of the Sherman Hotel [Chicago] in a mood of perfect harmony unbroken by the tiniest ripple of discord All is well with the Theosophical Society in America

October No Birthday Message this year

By Dr Besant

The long American Tour is over, from the Atlantic Coast on the one side to Vancouver on the other At the end, I am thankful to say, I am none the worse in any way, being quite vigorous and thoroughly well But my correspondence has suffered badly for which I apologise to all who have written to me and have not been answered I am glad to have time to answer those which still need replies

I have settled down for awhile in the Ojai Valley with our Krishnaji, and Lady Emily Lutyens and her daughter Mary arrive there on the 16th instant (December) I say "there" because I am writing from Los Angeles, whither we motored over yesterday from the Valley, in order to meet our visitors, who arrived from England this morning (December 13th) looking very well, after their swift rush across the continent Los Angeles is eighty

miles from Ojai, and the drive is a beautiful one, the road winding along among the mountains. (*The Theosophist*, February, 1927).

[December 28th, 1926. At the Star Meeting at Krotana, Ojai, California, Dr. Besant took the chair.]

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By various editorial writers :

The Fifty-first Anniversary of the Theosophical Society was held at Benares in December 1926.

Dr. Besant's Presidential Address began as follows :

“ BRETHREN :

For the second time since my feet touched the sacred soil of India, I am afar from her shores on the Anniversary of our beloved Society. The distance is so great that it was not possible for me to receive the Annual Reports in time to write my own Report, but my beloved Brother, the Vice-President, (C. Jinarajadasa) takes my place. Now, long afterwards, I write the Presidential Report, that no gap may remain permanently in our records.”

1927

There was a gathering of about 200 members of the Order of the Star in the East at Ojai on January 11th, 1927, at which Dr. Besant presided.

February 7th, 1927, Dr. Besant wrote to Members of the Theosophical Society from Ojai, California, an appeal for “ The Happy Valley Foundation Fund.”

*The Theosophist* (March). Just as we go to press we receive a cable which tells that our President and Editor





w I not now go to Australia but will remain in Europe, arriving there in April as at present arranged Dr Besant has booked the Queen's Hall London, for lectures on the several Sundays in June

. . . . .

Dr Besant resumes

On July 26, a large hall in the Holborn Restaurant was crowded at a dinner given to celebrate the foundation of the Malthusian League The newspapers over here seem to be much surprised that I should be so busy at my present age Here is a specimen paragraph from an evening London paper, *The Star*

" Dr Annie Besant is to be the guest of honour at a dinner to be given at the Holborn Restaurant next Tuesday in celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the famous trial in which she and Charles Bradlaugh the famous M P , were prosecuted for republishing Dr Charles Knowlton's pamphlet, *The Fruits of Philosophy* One of the results of the trial was the formation of the Malthusian League, of the original group of which Mrs Besant is the only survivor

" This will make the third function in which Dr Annie Besant, who is an octogenarian, takes a prominent part in a week, the others being the Indian Commonwealth League reception (at which she was the guest of honour) and the Fellowship of Faiths meeting tomorrow

I decline to fall into the error that I should be laid up in lavender merely because I have nearly completed eighty years in this body I will drop it and assume another when

it is worn-out but, meanwhile, why should I not go on working ? (*The Theosophist*, September).

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Mr. Max Wardall writes :

“ Our President’s latest and most daring and strenuous adventure is her attempt to cover Europe by aeroplane in 21 days, giving more than 50 lectures in the chief Capitals of Germany, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland and France—a seemingly breathless undertaking ; yet we are already at Stockholm near the Arctic Circle and all is well. . . . We began the flight at Amsterdam on August 18th, immediately after the conclusion of the Order of Service Congress at Ommén.” (*Adyar Bulletin*, October).

A letter from Paris dated September 7th says :

“ She asks me to say that she arrived this morning at about 9 a.m. quite well, after her month of ‘ flying visits,’ flying literally to almost every capital in Europe. A most amazing and marvellous ‘ itinerary,’ one that should be kept for ever as a record of what She—and 80—can do. She looks younger than when she left ! And as always she is quiet and calm and stable, as though she might have been here for weeks ; rather rejoicing at the possibility of eight or nine days in one place . . . and not too many engagements we hope.”

October. There was no Birthday Message in 1927, but the following extract has been made from the *Herald of the Star* :

“ . . . . If Liberation meant for me the desertion of the suffering, the miserable and the ignorant, I would say,



• No Liberation while those are bound but the effort to break their bonds or to share them while the bonds remain unbroken for I am a disciple of One who keeps the burden of the flesh that He may serve His younger brothers. He who took the responsibility with His Great Brother for the founding of The Theosophical Society. They gave it to the world for millions to come so that those who cannot yet reach Liberation might be guided along the Path that will lead them also on their way. I have no desire to leave a world of Bondage until I have seen my race go on in front of me. Any means to reach them, which are righteous, any means to carry to them the Light which will lighten their darkness. There are so many blind, so many helpless so many who have no friends to teach them or to show them sympathy, shall I not carry the message of the Teachers to them in a form they can understand, and give the lame, the crippled, the helpless, the crutches—if you like to call them so—by which they can advance on the Path that leads to eternal happiness?

\* \* \* \* \*

Dr. Besant continues

From *The Theosophist*, November

I sent the following message to the Danish Scouts. People seem to like it, so I print it in *The Theosophist* for any Scouts who read our Magazine

Copenhagen,  
August 24th, 1927

Dear Young Brothers and Sisters

Will you try to remember that on you and on others like you the future of every country depends?

You are the men and women citizens of the coming age, the fathers and mothers of the next generation.

Among you are the leaders of the days to come. Be brave, faithful, honourable, strong, gentle and loving. Keep your bodies pure, your emotions noble, your thoughts strong and clean. So shall our Elder Brothers, the World-Teacher and the World-Mother bless you and make you a blessing to Denmark and to the world.

ANNIE BESANT

I am giving a last lecture in the Queen's Hall, London, on "The Future of Europe, Peace or War?" In the visits to many countries in my flight over the north and east of Europe, I found so many causes of trouble were growing up, that after lecturing on the subject in Budapest, Vienna and Geneva, I resolved to deal with the question in London, one of the greatest political centres in the world.

December. Home again after a year and five months' absence in many lands. Captain Max Wardall's two articles in *New India*, under the quaint title, "Dr. Besant's Flight," have given a lively sketch of the chiefly aeroplane flyings over the north and east of Europe. Some accounts of the general work done will be found in the Presidential speech. . . . Things are changing rapidly in Europe, in the world of thought as in the physical world.

My Co-Editor of *New India* and myself are engaged at the present time in a rather strenuous political tour in South India. We left Madras at 10 p.m. on November 15. . . . We reached Kumbhakonam at 7.8 next morning, and

outside the political lecture there was a crowded meeting for the presentation of a Municipal address

At Kumbhakonam we paid a visit to the Crayon Works of Mr Gopalaswami Sastri, and learned the unexpected uses to which chalk could be turned, outside its humble services on the black-board. Figures of Rishis and Avatars, of kings and warriors, of buildings elaborately decorated, of animals of all kinds, presented themselves to our surprised gaze. Then we motored to the South Indian Weaving Works, where Mr S R Sundaram Aiyar has numbers of improved handlooms clacking and humming. We had a charming 14 miles drive to a station connected with Negapatam next morning, past ponds which blossomed into lovely pink lotuses.

But oh! the roads, the bumps, the jolts. Krishnaji joined us at Madura, or rather we joined him in the train at that famous town. There was a great reception at the station and people lined the road almost to our temporary abode. We had been at Tanjore the evening before, and were up at 4 this morning, to catch the mail at 5.40. There are Theosophical and Star Conferences, which explain Krishnaji's presence here.

He returns to Madras on the 21st, and Shiva Rao and I go on to our fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth towns returning to Madras on the 28th. Off again to a United Conference at Calicut. I am doing my best to unite all parties, to rally round the Home Rule Constitution.

[The Fifty-second Anniversary of the Theosophical Society Convention was held at Adyar, Madras, in December 1927.] By a very unfortunate accident, the written copy

of my address at the Convention has been destroyed. I have to rewrite it afresh, a troublesome and lengthy task for one so fully occupied as I am. I cannot do it till I reach Adyar next month [March], as I have not with me on tour the necessary materials.

1928

*The Theosophist.* To every reader I send a wish for a useful and therefore a Happy Year, and the hope that the First of January, 1929, may find each of you stronger, calmer, more tolerant, more loving, and therefore a better channel for the rays of the Spiritual Sun, ever shining down on our world. . . .

May I venture to mention to my readers that we are now entering on what I hope is the last stage of our struggle for Home Rule in India, and that they would do well, if they care for this struggle, to take in *New India*, which is now a Weekly, and in which I am writing nearly every week. We are following the precedent set by Australia of presenting to the British Parliament a Constitution framed by Indian members of the Legislatures—except for 19 outstanding figures in the public life of India, 18 of whom were Indians.

February. I must apologise to the readers of *The Theosophist* for the lateness of this number. The fault lies entirely with myself, for I have failed to supply the necessary "copy" in time. My work was unexpectedly heavy, and refused to be crowded into the time at my disposal. It is February 1st that finds me on the

Watch-Tower, and the greater part of these notes is written in the railway train between Allahabad and Benares

For at Benares is to be held our first Indian Star Camp That begins today with the arrival of the campers

We missed the train we should have taken by reason of a heavy storm causing absences of jukkas for luggage and therefore missed the opening of the Camp, but we arrived in time for the first Camp fire      Krishnaji read one of his beautiful poems, and then asked me to speak, I, of course, obeyed his wish, but spoke briefly, knowing that the assembly wanted to hear him rather than me

February 3 Benares

The Boycott [of the Simon Commission] has been carried out here with complete success A friend coming in from the City reports that not a vehicle is seen in the streets Tomorrow's papers, with reports from all parts of India should be interesting The Boycott only lasts till 3 30 p m, as there are meetings all over the land

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By various writers

March Our President has been away (from Adyar) Indian-Constitution-making in Delhi for some considerable time, and we do not expect her back until nearly the end of March

We saw our Editor (*The Adyar Bulletin*) off from Bombay on June 2nd, on the P and O S S *Macedonia*, for her work in the West Cables tell us that Dr Besant and her party arrived in London a day late (June 17th) owing to the monsoon Many members welcomed her at

Victoria Station and amongst them Krishnaji, who we hope will return to India with her [in August] after Ommen.

From a letter of Mrs. Whyte :

“ Dr. Besant was one of the speakers at the Central Hall, Westminster, at a Public Meeting arranged in connection with the Anglo-American Congress, July 5th, 6th and 7th. She made a magnificent appeal to her hearers to outlaw war in their own hearts and find good points in everyone, especially in those of another race and country, to banish passports and do away with barriers. Mr. Clynes, speaking after her, referred to what she had said, adding : ‘ Dr. Besant, who is, I think, a little nearer to the Angels than the rest of us.’ . . . At the House of Commons to-day (July 9th), by invitation of the ‘ British Committee of Indian Affairs ’ and the ‘ Commonwealth Labour Group,’ Dr. Annie Besant met and conversed with several M.P.’s, and gave a short talk on the situation in India.”

From *The Theosophist* (September) by G.S.A. :

“ As most of our readers will already be aware, the President has not been at all well in London and has been compelled to cancel all her public engagements including the last of the Queen’s Hall lectures. . . . The latest news is, however, most satisfactory, and although Dr. Besant is still weak she is much better, expecting to leave Europe on August 10th for India in order to be in time to attend a very important political meeting in Lucknow on August 28th.”

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October 1st. Birthday Message :

“ It is glorious to live in this critical time, and to offer ourselves joyfully as channels for ‘ The Power that makes

for Righteousness,' by whatever name we may call that Power Service is the true Greatness, living as we do in a world in which so many suffer blindly and resentfully, a world which sorely needs the help of all who love

Dr Besant, in response to a request from the World Peace Union for a message, wrote the following

### WORLD PEACE UNION

The final renunciation of War in the settling of human disputes is being gravely considered today by the nations of the world It is the burning question of the hour and must be solved Each of us can do something to create an atmosphere in which this great movement can thrive and come to a successful conclusion

Groups of international peace workers, who realise that aspiration and prayer, if informed by thought, are irresistible factors in the attainment of World Peace, have organised a Peace Week from next November 4th to 11th It culminates at the moment of the Great Silence at 11 o'clock on November 11th

Beginning on the morning of November 4th, hundreds of thousands of people in 43 countries of the globe will think, aspire, and act to this great end

Will you not help? Make this week a period of harmony filled with the longing for human brotherhood and permanent peace

On November 11th at 11 o'clock, please hold during the Great Silence the thoughts of this prayer

O Hidden Life of God, outside which nothing can exist, help us to see Thee in the face of our enemies and

to love Thee in them. So shall Thy Peace spread over our world, and Thy Will shall at last be done on Earth as it is done in Heaven.

ANNIE BESANT

My first words, in re-seating myself in the editorial chair, must be of grateful thanks to those who have carried on the work during my absence. It is good to feel that one is not necessary, and I think that to create a group of efficient workers is a greater proof of sound leadership than to be one whose work collapses when his or her hand is withdrawn. Most loving thanks, then, dear comrades mine. *The Theosophist* (December).

1929

From *The Theosophist* (January) :

I have been reading over the Tragedy of *The Phoenix* in 1885, and from this it is clear how much the power of the Masters to help is limited by the karma of India, karma caused chiefly by her shameful social conditions. The terrible treatment of our brothers, the so-called "untouchables" ; those who treat human beings as untouchable by their birth, are themselves rendered truly untouchable by their own pride and silly arrogance. . . . Our disregard of the Law of Brotherhood in our treatment of these comes back upon us in the similar disregard of it in our rulers in their treatment of us. What right have we to complain of injustice and tyranny when we pour out the same deadly forces on those who are helpless to defend themselves against us? The blood of our brothers cries out to God



from the ground and draws down on us the curse of subjection to foreign rule. One of the greatest obstacles to our Freedom will be cleared away when we recognise our brotherhood with the Untouchables.

February. I said last month that *New India* (the Daily) was struggling for its life. Theosophists have remained indifferent as they were to the *Phoenix* and it will have breathed its last on January 31. The only daily paper in India which worked for the Plan of the Hierarchy consciously,—the Freedom of India as one of the Free and Self-Governing Nations linked by the British Crown—and stood by it unflinchingly whether it were popular or unpopular disappears. It has a good record, so can go peacefully. The *Weekly* will be printed at my other press near Adyar built by me on ground leased to myself and unconnected with the Theosophical Society, though I print many, not all of its publications. The Society carries on no business.

March. It is very pleasant to be sitting in the President's room at Adyar, the most homely place to me on earth. Let me tell you why, and then you will understand the reason. Our first President, our President-Founder, the colleague of our Messenger from the White Lodge, H P B., the lion-hearted, lived here. She it was who stood like a rock amid the storms of ridicule and slander that beat upon her, who never flinched and never despaired. I am writing in the room beside that from which the Colonel went Home, that is my bedroom, as it was his, and it opens into this sitting-room, where I work, when I am at Adyar.

I leave Adyar for Bombay tonight (April 17th), as the Local Congress Committee asks for a lecture on the Nehru Report, and I am always glad to do anything I can to forward that useful piece of work. One does not feel hopeful of any good results, now that H. E. the Viceroy (has) established the Public "Safety Bill," which places good citizens in danger as to their liberty and property. Still, nothing can prevent the advent of India's Liberty, for it has been promised by the Real Ruler of the World, and the folk who play their parts on the stage of the world are, after all, only mechanical marionettes.

[The President, writing from Budapest May 16th, says that all has gone well so far. . . . "All the arrangements here for the European Federation are admirably made," she writes: "The Government is very friendly because of my protest against the injustice with which Hungary has been treated in the treaty of Trianon. . . . I am well, very well, I am glad to say, and my voice is in very good order." . . . From England she writes: "I have the happy announcement to make that, thanks to the splendid work done by my dear Brother C. Jinarajadasa, I was able to announce to the European Conference at Budapest the formation of two more National Societies, the T. S. in Central America, and the T.S. in Peru."]

I am hoping to meet many members at the World Congress, in Chicago (August 24 to 29). I go to the Camp at Ommen, but shall, I fear, have to leave it for the U.S.A. before it closes. Evidently my karma just now is in wide journeyings, but it is very delightful to meet, wherever I go, faithful and devoted members of our

be'oved Society the corner stone of the future religions of the world

Yesterday night— Wednesday June 5th one of my dearly loved and wholly trustworthy sons passed into the Peace after long suffering and patient endurance Pandharinath Telang was one of my colleagues in the Central Hindu School and College Benares now the Hindu University For long years we have worked together in the Theosophical Society and in the Home Rule League for the beloved Motherland Never a jar occurred in our relationship never a moment of alienation He has passed by many years my junior— ahead of me into the Light Eternal that is the tragedy of prolonged age on earth

July My meetings on Theosophical subjects have been well attended this year in the many countries visited and I was glad to be able to preside at the Conventions in Hungary England and Scotland In Ireland I lectured in Dublin and in Belfast and crossing over from Ireland to Scotland I lectured in Edinburgh going on from there to the Fair City of Perth where the Scottish Convention was held It was as it always is a very harmonious warm-hearted Convention for though Scottish air is cold Scottish hearts are warm At Edinburgh I introduced Mrs Logan—who had come over with Krishnaji from the United States—to the famous Canongate and to Arthur's Seat both of which exercised over her their usual fascination She is going back to the United States after the Ommen Camp, and carrying me back with her to the Theosophical World-Congress at Chicago

August. The dissolution of the Order of the Star will come as a shock to many, for in a world in which Life manifests itself in forms, the formless is generally regarded as unmanifested. . . .

[The World Congress at Chicago was inaugurated on August 26th. The Presidential Address was given by Dr. Besant. The whole of Wednesday's session was devoted to the Order of Service under the chairmanship of Captain Max Wardall. Dr. Besant indited the following letter to President Hoover :]

*September 1, 1929*

To the President of the United States of America.

May it please Your Excellency,

The Fourth World-Congress of the Theosophical Society, and its National Sections in forty-five countries was held in Chicago, Ill., from August 24th to 29th. The first Object of the Theosophical Society is to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, and its National Sections are found in Europe, Asia, Africa, India, Australasia, Northern, Central and Southern America. Over 1,700 members from all parts of the world attended the Congress of 1929.

It held a farewell banquet on August 29th, and I, as President of the International Society, proposed, and Mr. Rogers, as President of the Theosophical Society in the United States of America, seconded a resolution, which was carried by acclamation, that :

We, the Fourth World Congress of the Theosophical Society, pray Mr. Hoover, the President of the United States of America, who saw in Europe the devastation wrought by war, and who nobly devoted himself to the relief of its victims, to lead the Nations of the world to the outlawry

of war and to the establishment of arbitration for the decision of international disputes

Respectfully yours

ANNIE BESANT

*President International Society*

Three words describe the Theosophical Congress [at Chicago] A magnificent success A B

October 1st Birthday Message If every one of us will work strenuously and continuously until each has purged his own heart of every trace of resentment against every person who has he thinks injured him we shall then find perhaps to our surprise that Peace is reigning over the whole world

I was 82 on October 1st of the present year During those years I have obeyed the instructions given to me by my Guru in my political (as in all other) actions in India and England Lord Haldane generously spoke of me as a great statesman and Mr Geoffrey West has stressed my foresight in political matters I can tell looking back that such foresight does seem remarkable on the surface But it is not foresight it is due to my prompt and implicit obedience to the orders of my Guru as will be seen as the story [of how India became a partner member in the Federation of Free Nations etc] proceeds I have often been pressed to write a continuance of my *Autobiography*, but have refused because of this invisible but most vital part of my life I should not do it now even partially were I not desired to disclose it for the dear sake of India's Freedom in a word Dominion Status such as Canada enjoys (*The Theosophist*, November)

Once more I am at Home in "The Motherland of my Master," as H.P.B. called India. Dear must that land be to all Theosophists, since it gave bodies so often to Those whom we now know as "Masters"—the Elder Brethren of our Humanity.

The Foundation Day of the Theosophical Society [November 17] was duly observed in Adyar. We held at 8 a.m. a short meeting addressed by myself, in the Headquarters Hall. At 3 p.m. I attended a Tea-Party at the Mani Iyer Hall in Triplicane (Madras), of the United T.S. Lodges of Madras, and later gave a short address.

I have resolved, as a result of my observations in America, to remove the publication of *The Theosophist* from India to the United States. . . . I remain the Chief Editor, and shall write in it each month ; but I shall have in California the brilliant aid of Mrs. Hotchener, while Mr. Hotchener is kind enough to act as Business Manager. . . . The name of the magazine published at Adyar will be changed in the January Number to *The Adyar Theosophist*, on January 15, the day of its publication. *The Theosophist* published at Adyar, the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society, is the property and the organ of the elected President of the Society. (*The Theosophist*, December).

1930

*The Adyar Theosophist* (January) :

A quaint memory comes to me of a newspaper cutting recording my entry into the Theosophical Society in 1889, and after mentioning it, the journal remarked that I

had been a Christian a Freethinker and an Atheist and should probably complete my journey by becoming a Roman Catholic. But I have been a Theosophist for forty years now and feel no inclination to go out of the Society but only to penetrate more and more deeply into the wonderful depths and heights of Theosophy the Divine Wisdom.

March For fifty years our Adyar has been spreading abroad great Theosophical ideas. To complete the principle of the trinity in brotherhood and in beauty that is in emotional and in physical ways she should also have much to give. As to the latter every visitor testifies and now and then we see a party of Thos. Cook & Son's tourists being shown selected beauty spots in the estate. But now that beauty is to be broadcasted in another way. For the last week one of the leading Indian Film corporations has been shooting scenes in various parts of the estate. They declare that they cannot find such a quality and variety of beauty spots elsewhere. We are glad to delight the minds of the millions who will see the beauty of Adyar on the silver screen and also to help India's industries by the way.

April The present plan of having two editions (of *The Theosophist*) is an attempt to reach readers far apart in space at the same time as that at which they received the old single edition. I notice that a critic, to whom I serve as the proverbial red flag to a bull accuses me of embezzling the subscriptions to *The Theosophist*. I was not aware that he had access to my Bank-book! He knows very well, I think that he cannot provoke me into prosecuting him. My position towards him resembles that of the prize fighter who was asked why he allowed his wife to

beat him. He answered, smiling : " It amuses her, and it does not hurt me." I grant that my perennial assailant chooses a quaint form of amusement. But what of that ? " It takes all sorts to make a world."

*From various sources :*

Last night (11th May) our President, accompanied by Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, entrained for Colombo. There they intend to join Bishop Leadbeater and party on board the R.M.S. " Orama," bound for Europe.

From *News and Notes* (London). A large gathering welcomed our President at Victoria Station on Monday, June 2nd, on her arrival from India. She was accompanied by Mr. Jinarajadasa and other friends. As usual, no time was lost in starting work. On Thursday she visited the House of Commons to address Members of both Houses of Parliament on the present position of India. . . . Dr. Besant spoke for over an hour to a crowded audience in the largest Committee Room of the House of Commons.

On Friday, June 27th, Dr. Besant gave her official address, at the Tenth Congress of the Theosophical Society in Europe at Geneva, and on July 5th she delivered the opening address at the English Convention.

Dr. Besant was at the Star Camp, Ommen, Holland from August 3rd to August 8th. She returned to London by air.

On October 1st, a large number of F.T.S. met at the Friends' Meeting House, London, to greet our honoured President on her eighty-third birthday. Dr. Besant had that day attended the wedding of her grand-daughter,



Miss Sybil Besant to Commander Lewis and on the following day was leaving London for India. The President's address to the members was full of vigour and wisdom. 'The basis of the Theosophical life is self forgetting service to those who need our help and to this end we must discipline our minds and learn the value of clear and impersonal thought.'

On October 2nd a large party gathered at Victoria Station to bid farewell to the President and Mr Jinarajadasa who travel via Marseilles and Bombay.

October 1st Birthday Message. If every one of us will work strenuously and continuously until each has purged his own heart of every trace of resentment against every person who has he thinks injured him we shall then find perhaps to our surprise that Peace is reigning over the world.

Dr Besant was at Adyar in November. There are entries in the Diary to the effect that certain meetings had to be cancelled owing to her failing health.

On December 19th Dr Besant left Adyar for Benares where the 55th Annual Convention was held. She delivered the First Convention Lecture on December 22nd on 'The Future of the Theosophical Society'.

\* \* \* \*

1931

See the One Life in all and study most carefully its manifestation where it attracts you least. It is in that you can gather the quality which you need most.

ANNIE BESANT

This was written in a schoolgirl's Album in Benares, January 1, 1931.

Dr. Besant writes, *The Theosophist* (January) :

I have decided to issue the international *Theosophist*—THE THEOSOPHIST—once again from Adyar, the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society. The change made a year ago of publishing it in the United States has helped that National Society, but the other National Societies have suffered by not receiving direct from Adyar that inspiration for their work which only Adyar, the Centre on earth for the forces of Shamballa, can send.

I have decided to celebrate H.P.B.'s Centenary at Adyar on August 11, 1931. Adyar was chosen by the Hierarchy as the Centre for the Movement inaugurated in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, and Their faithful Brother and Messenger for that fateful period was H.P.B. Her whole-souled devotion to her Master and her lion-hearted courage knew no delay, no hesitation, when He spoke. His word was Law, because He was Law embodied, and when He said : " It is the Law," His disciples rendered and still render to Him immediate unquestioning obedience. That the world regarded their obedience as " hasty," " blind," fanatical," moved them not at all. There are times when in such obedience lies the only safety. As criticism of a Master is like a criticism of a Law in Nature, it is idle to indulge in it.

ANNIE BESANT

P.S. Last July, in Geneva, I accepted the invitation of Dr. de Purucker of Point Loma to attend the celebration which he was organising. But as he has pointed out that

my acceptance of his invitation was too precipitate and as I think that his criticism was just this change of plan and the decision to celebrate the Anniversary at Adyar should suit him

*The Theosophist* (February)

Well may we who know the truth think of H P Blavatsky - who was the Messenger from the White Lodge for the last quarter of the nineteenth century—with a passionate gratitude too great for words— all words are too feeble to express it a gratitude due to One who brought to us Theosophy the Divine Wisdom that we might grasp it and live it and make it our own, changing a dim hope into a radiant a living certainty I, who recognised the Divine Wisdom as I eagerly read *The Secret Doctrine*, and promptly sought the writer—who refused me as pupil till I had read the childish Hodgson Report I accepted Theosophy at once at 42 years of age—and I am now on the verge of my 84th year and have never had a doubt—for I remembered it, and gave myself as pupil to the writer All over the world I have taught it, and it has never failed me, I know my Teacher, to whom Mme Blavatsky led me, and have laid my life at His Feet Is it then wonderful that I, having passed through many changes and many storms, having found Theosophy and with it found Peace, remain steadfast to Theosophy? My belief is based on knowledge, not on authority, though I gratefully study any line of study recommended to me by my Teacher —A B

[During February, at the President's wish, an informal meeting was called of certain members of the Society, young and old, who live in the city of Madras, to consider

what more can be done to bring the citizens of Madras nearer to the ideal represented by Adyar. . . . As one useful activity suggested, a series of lectures was organised in Gokhale Hall, with the general title "How to Live," the lecturers and subjects being : 1. The General Attitude of the Theosophist to Life, by Bishop Leadbeater, 2. The Theosophist's attitude to the City and the Nation, by Mr. Jinarajadasa ; 3. The Theosophist's Search for Religion among the Religions, by Mr. Jinarajadasa ; and 4. The Theosophist's Attitude to Death and After, by Bishop Leadbeater.]

The special task for 1931, H.P.B.'s Centenary, sent to us, who belong to the Theosophical Society, seems to me to be contained in the words of a Master addressed to myself : " Your work in 1931 is to make Adyar once more a flaming Centre of Life and Love, radiating in all directions over the world." . . . For this reason H.P.B.—the Messenger of the White Lodge . . .—was sent to live here for awhile long before her name became so well known to the public. It was her duty to create here the atmosphere for the permanent Headquarters of the Theosophical Society.—A.B. (*The Theosophist*, June).

The departure of three Australian members who visited Adyar for six weeks was the occasion for the President to send an autograph letter of greeting to members in Australia. Her message was as follows :

June 19, 1931.

Dear Brèthren,

May the blessing of the Masters rest on your work in Australia. Much of my future lies in that land, and the

seed you are sowing there it will be my privilege and my happiness to reap when the time for the harvesting arrives. Let us then look forward to that future which we shall share, for in due season we shall reap if we forget not that future.

ANNIE BESANT

By the Acting Editor and others

*The Theosophist* (July)

Last Watch-Tower mentioned that the President had injured her knee and was confined to her bed. This month (July) we have the pleasant news that she has practically recovered from that particular injury, and is able to walk about her room and verandah with a little assistance, such as holding on to someone's arm. She has not yet gone downstairs, but hopes in a few days to do so, and particularly to be present at her weekly Sunday tea-party under the Banyan Tree for the residents at Adyar.—C. J.

The two following letters of the President, though several months old, will be read by all with interest.—C.J.

November 14, 1930.

To Dr. Carlos A. Stoppel,

General Secretary,

Theosophical Society in Argentine.

Dear Sir and Brother,

I am ever so old, 83 this year, and though I am very well, there cannot be many years more in front of me. Should I be able to visit South America—of which my

ANNIE BESANT

Brother Jinarâjadâsa gives me such attractive accounts—  
I certainly shall include Argentine in my tour.  
With brotherly good wishes,

ANNIE BESANT

January 30, 1931.

To Mr. L. W. Rogers,

General Secretary,

American Theosophical Society.

Dear Mr. Rogers,

Thanks, many and sincere, for your very kind letter, sending me the good wishes of our American brethren. I am, of course, willing to stay as long as my Master can make use of my old body. I asked to be allowed to resign, on the ground of my age, but my Master answered that They had, at present, no one else who contacted so many kinds of people, holding so many different opinions. His word is to me Law. So I stay, as a soldier stays at his post until relieved!

With very kind regards to the United States Brethren,  
Yours very cordially,

ANNIE BESANT

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September. All will be glad to hear that Dr. Besant is once again able to go for drives in her car. Her knee still gives much trouble, particularly when she is ascending or descending stairs; but it is possible now for her with some pain to descend from her rooms and occasionally attend her weekly tea-party to members under the Banyan.

As will be seen in the reports of the H P B Celebration on August 11th and 12th, she was present at both the public meetings in Headquarters Hall —C J

October 1st, Birthday Message "We love to think of the Masters as our Elder Brothers, as They graciously call Themselves Are we as eager to claim the lowest criminal as our baby brother, needing our tenderest care? Let us each day throughout the coming year send a loving thought to our babes all the world over

A Birthday Resolution

I

On each day and all day long, during the coming year I will patiently try to tune my life into harmony with that of the Christ within me

II

On each day, and all day long, during the coming year I will patiently try to tune my life into fuller harmony with that of the Divine Master who dwells in my heart

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Many generous friends in India have contributed to the cost of a lift at Adyar, so that Dr Besant may not have the trying experience of going up and down stairs with a weak knee The lift is strong and safe but slow as it is cranked by hand

Dr Besant's humour never deserts her, and even in times of weakness the Irish wit flashes out One day, on

her return from a drive she was very tired and sat down very wearily in the chair in the lift. Now the lift moves so slowly that one has carefully to note its shadow to notice its movement. Tired as she was, Dr. Besant remarked casually "We go by faith, not by sight!"—C.J.

The Convention was held at Adyar from December 24th to 29th. Mr. A. P. Warrington and Mrs. Warrington arrived at Adyar on the 18th from California. Mr. Warrington presided at the Convention, but at the opening on December 24th Dr. Besant made a short speech. (This Meeting is described in *The Theosophist*, February 1932, and also under the title of "Recollections of Annie Besant" by A. P. Warrington, in *The Theosophist*, April 1939.)

Mr. Warrington writes: "Dr. Besant then proceeded to give what I believe to be one of the most significant talks of her remarkable career. She appealed to us to live our Theosophy, stating that we could only spread Theosophy as we lived it. 'It is not words, it is life that affects people,' she said. 'Do not imagine that because you are not learned. . . . you cannot influence people . . . you can because they see your life.' She thought that most of us were afraid to trust ourselves, and urged that we go deep within ourselves and give our trust there. 'Learn to trust the divine in you,' she said, 'There lies your real strength. You are divine.' Again she said: 'If only I could inspire you with what I know to be true—that the very best of us is when we pour out love to those around. . . . It matters very little what you believe; it matters enormously what you are. . . . Give the God in you a chance. Open yourself and pour out to all around



you Love is always good even when sometimes its expression may be foolish Believe in the self in you the God within you and then you will live the noblest life because it is a life of love

1932

January In spite of Dr Besant's physical disabilities her mind dwells only upon one thought—the Work At the beginning of the New Year she wrote the following in the autograph album of a young worker

Work so that the world may be the better for you living in it Love all but love most those who are unloving for their need is the greatest Protect the weak and shelter the homeless forget not our younger brethren of the animal kingdom that they may develop our higher qualities and thus co operate with the Devas in working for swifter evolution —C J

*From Mr Warrington's Diary March 13 1932*

Saw Dr Besant She was all there Talked of taking non sectarianism into the Society Wanted to unite our lives and ideals with all spiritual people's ideals She defined Theosophy as the living of the highest spiritual ideals with the greatest nobility Evidently she feels we are in a dogmatic rut and wishes to see us really universalists

On July 6th Dr Besant completed her twenty fifth year as President of the Theosophical Society

August A few weeks ago a slip of paper on which Dr Besant had written in pencil was found in a book which she had been reading in August of last year The paper

bore on it a thought of hers concerning the H.P.B. Centenary which was about to be celebrated. "H.P.B. gave to the world Theosophy, H. S. Olcott gave to the world The Theosophical Society. Each was chosen by the Masters: which brought the greater gift?"—ANNIE BESANT.

*Birthday Celebration at Adyar on October 1st.*

At 10.30 a.m. Brahmin priests came in procession from the Bharata Samaj Temple with "Purna Kumbha" (sacred vessel of magnetized water) and Dr. Besant received them at the door of her apartment. They chanted Vedic verses invoking upon her the blessings of the Devas. At 3.45 all the residents filed past her, where she sat on her verandah; they laid flowers in her hands, and she greeted each, touching their hands.

At the 57th Annual Convention held at Adyar from December 24th to 27th Dr. Besant did not come down into the Convention Hall, but sent the following message which was read to the delegates by Mr. A. P. Warrington, the Vice-President:

"Dear friends and brothers, sons and daughters, I welcome you here today with all my heart. Each one of you is dear to me as though my own son or daughter, and there is nothing could make me so happy as to have you gathered round me in the Master's home. To Their home indeed I welcome you. May his Blessing rest on the heads of each one of His children.

May you all rest in His Presence.

May His Love remain with you.